

# **The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR**

Lilita Dzirkals, Thane Gustafson, A. Ross Johnson

**Rand**

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September 1982





## PREFACE

Between 1978 and 1981, The Rand Corporation conducted a comparative study of the role of the media in intra-elite communication in Communist countries. Western analysts of the political process in "closed" Communist systems necessarily rely heavily on the published and broadcast output of the mass and specialized media. These media are in part propaganda organs, but they also have other functions. A generation of Sovietologists (and specialists on other Communist states) has had to base much of its analysis of policies and politics on interpretations of media nuances. Yet the assumptions of Sovietologists about the relationship between the media and the political actors whose behavior or attitudes are inferred from media content have received little attention.

The Rand study was initiated to fill this need. Its emphasis is not on techniques of content analysis, which have received considerable attention in the past, but rather on the *process* by which politically significant material appears in Communist-country media, that is, how such material originates, gains approval, and is edited and censored before it appears as a written or spoken product. The study tests the validity of the usual Kremlinological assumption that the media of the USSR or other Communist countries are utilized as an instrument of power struggle and policy debate by contending leaders or groups. It seeks to establish the degree to which and the circumstances under which partisan views of particular leaders, groupings, or institutions may find expression in the controlled media.

In contrast to the many studies based on content analysis alone, and in an effort to test the often unexamined assumptions of content-analysis studies, this study is based primarily on information obtained from extended interviews with émigrés formerly involved in the media process—writers, journalists, editors, censors, and government and Party officials. The study focuses on the medium in the expectation that this will enhance the analyst's ability to interpret its message.

The study included investigations of both Soviet and Polish media. Polish media were selected for analysis in part because in the 1960s and 1970s they appeared to differ more than other East European media from Soviet practice and in part because better information about their operations was available. The results of the investigation of Polish media have been published in Rand Report R-2627, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, by Jane Leftwich Curry and A. Ross Johnson, December 1980, which provides an overview analysis and conclusions, and in a series of Rand Notes, which contain more detailed analyses and documentation of the research:

- N-1514/1, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Organization and Control of the Media*, by Jane Leftwich Curry, December 1980, reviews the controls over and the internal organization and process of Polish media.
- N-1514/2, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The System of Censorship*, by Jane Leftwich Curry, December 1980, documents in detail the structure and operations of the formal censorship system.

- N-1514/3, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The Role of Military Journals*, by A. Ross Johnson, December 1980, details the structure and process of military publication.
- N-1514/4, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The Role of "Special Bulletins"*, by Jane Leftwich Curry, December 1980, reviews the important role played by limited-distribution bulletins in informing the Polish leadership about domestic and foreign affairs.
- N-1514/5, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Case Studies of Controversy*, by Jane Leftwich Curry and A. Ross Johnson, December 1980, describes six cases that are illustrative of discussion, debate, and controversy in Polish media.

The present report contains the results of the study of Soviet media, which was carried out by Lilita Dzirkals, Thane Gustafson, A. Ross Johnson (study director), and S. Enders Wimbush (formerly a Rand staff member), with additional contributions by Abraham Becker and Jeremy R. Azrael (formerly a Rand consultant). The co-investigators conducted extended interviews with 56 former Soviet journalists, experts, and editors in 1978-1981. The interviews were conducted with the understanding that the interviewees would remain anonymous; this stipulation has precluded the normal referencing of source material and has necessitated omitting some of the details of specific events.

This report is intended as a contribution to assist Soviet affairs analysts in a reexamination of their working assumptions about Soviet media as an information source.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: HOW TO READ SOVIET MEDIA

This report tests basic assumptions used by Western analysts in interpreting the Soviet media by bringing to bear new information, derived from émigré interviews, about the structure and inner workings of Soviet media and the political mechanisms by which the media are controlled.

Western Sovietologists have long considered the Soviet media to be their basic analytic source. They have based their analyses on the assumption that by reading properly "between the lines" one can pick up real echoes of Soviet politics in action. Are such beliefs justified? To assert that the Western analyst is picking up real echoes, rather than noise or disinformation, implies certain basic assumptions about the way the Soviet media are managed. The Kremlinological school of analysis has generally assumed that not only differentiated verbal behavior of top leaders but any media differentiation on politically significant subjects is related to leadership controversy. The implicit assumption underlying most Western Kremlinological analyses is that continuous conflict among the top leadership prevents any one element of that leadership, however powerful, from effectively utilizing the control/censorship mechanism to suppress partisan communication from other elements.

Another school of Western analysis has focused on the role in the Soviet political process of particular institutions or bureaucracies and professional and occupational groups. This genre of analysis often assumes that individual media organs represent the viewpoints of specific organizations or groups. Still other analysts of the "interest grouping" persuasion focus on the coalescing in particular cases of specific lower-elite-level political groupings, usually cutting across a number of internally divided Soviet institutions. These analyses commonly assume that such groupings present their views in the media; some studies interpret media nuances, while others are based on explicit media controversy. Publications of Soviet research institutes figure prominently in all these schools of analysis; such publications are also sometimes viewed as authoritatively expressing the official Soviet "line" or, alternatively, as being of little use in analyzing political conflict because of the degree of professional autonomy achieved by institute scholars.

Until recently there had been no way to test these assumptions through direct inquiry. The internal structure of the Soviet media and the relations between the media and political authority were largely unknown. Only in the last decade, with the arrival in the West of a large number of former Soviet journalists, specialists, and others connected with media, has it been possible to glimpse the inside of what had been until then a "black box." The émigrés whom we interviewed did not hold high enough positions in the USSR to be able to provide first-hand descriptions of the upper level of the Soviet media control system. But they are knowledgeable about middle and lower levels of that system, and their testimony permits testing some of the Sovietologists' interpretations of Soviet media.

## MAJOR FEATURES OF THE SOVIET MEDIA-CONTROL SYSTEM

In structure and basic methods, the system for central leadership control of the Soviet media has remained constant for the last twenty-five years, despite the changes in the political atmosphere that have occurred during that period. The Politburo sets overall media policy, resolving organizational questions and making top personnel appointments. The Central Committee Secretariat oversees the media for the top leadership; until his death in 1982, Mikhail Suslov was primarily responsible for media affairs. Direct supervision of the media is the responsibility of the Central Committee Propaganda Department, which makes editorial appointments, disseminates directives on content, allocates resources, coordinates information inputs, and monitors media performance. One aspect of that supervision involves the "programming" of tone and coverage in specific media organs in order to reach different audiences with specific messages; individual media organs can take on a specific coloration for other reasons, but these must pass daily scrutiny of the Propaganda Department (and ultimately be accepted by the top leadership).

In supervising specialized publications, the Propaganda Department consults with the Central Committee functional departments. At times, jurisdictional lines among Central Committee departments are blurred, creating the potential for conflict among them and on occasion permitting editors and authors a greater degree of maneuvering.

The Central Committee apparatus may review a specific article prior to publication or direct the publication of a particular text prepared by its own officials. But such cases are the exception. The Propaganda Department is the agency that serves as the linchpin of a system intended to ensure limited direct intervention. Issues are prioritized. For example, supervision of international affairs media is evidently stricter than for most ordinary domestic topics. The Propaganda Department employs the formal censorship office, Glavlit, as its enforcement agency for technical questions. In contrast to the Polish censorship office,<sup>1</sup> the Soviet censorship offices—Glavlit and a number of specialized censorship agencies—play a relatively minor role as instruments of political control; that is the job of the chief editor. Glavlit ensures that no "secret" facts are revealed. Ministerial expertise is tapped by the requirement of a "visa"—an official sign-off—for material within the competence of a specialized ministry, except in cases where the Party apparatus directs criticism of a ministry. The procedure also recognizes ministerial authority; ministries actively lobby in the media, utilizing ministerial press centers for this purpose, but evidently with limited effect. The media-control system fosters self-control and self-censorship among journalists and junior editors by dealing harshly with those who transgress. Journalists and writers are, on balance, a reliable part of the system. Whereas in some specialized technical fields the Soviet professional has achieved a degree of latitude in affecting policy, that is not the case in the Soviet media.

The day-to-day job of applying controls over the media is delegated to chief editors. Most chief editors' careers include long years of service in the Central

<sup>1</sup> Jane Leftwich Curry and A. Ross Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, The Rand Corporation, R-2627, December 1980. The reader is referred especially to "Summary and Conclusions: How to Read Polish Media," pp. v-xi.

Committee apparatus or some other form of higher political training. Chief editors are executives and managers, often without prior journalism credentials. They spend a major portion of their working time in close contact with the Central Committee apparatus; biweekly conferences with chief editors are a key instrument of Propaganda Department media supervision. Chief editors are the effective political censors. Under Khrushchev, chief editors enjoyed a measure of latitude because of Khrushchev's concern with broadening the mass appeal and credibility of the media and because of fluidity in the top leadership. During that period, a few chief editors, such as Aleksandr Tvardovskii and Aleksei Adzhubei, put their own stamp on their respective media, just as Polish chief editors often did.

But under Brezhnev the control system tightened drastically. In the 1970s, chief editors generally lacked dominant political patrons; those who advanced through individual leader patronage (like Aleksandr Subbotin of *Trud*, who rose with Aleksandr Shelepin) survived the fall of their patron, suggesting a less dependent relationship in any case than may have been true under a more divided leadership. The career of the chief editor of *Izvestiia*, P. F. Alekseev, is illustrative: He survived the disgrace of his first two political patrons and was then entrusted with the chief editorships of *Sovetskaia Rossiia* and *Izvestiia*, where he imposed the stricter management and greater orthodoxy demanded by the Brezhnev regime.

The effect of tighter controls in the Brezhnev era varied among individual media, depending on their institutional subordination and their centrally approved "charter." At *Moskovskaia pravda*, Lev Spirodonov's appointment as chief editor in 1972 meant stricter management. Yet even in the more permissive Khrushchev period the editorial staff of *Moskovskaia pravda*, as the organ of the Moscow city Party committee (*gorkom*), was responsive to the *gorkom* apparatus and generally limited itself to "safe" material. Any criticism in *Moskovskaia pravda* of lower-level Party units required the authorization of the *gorkom* second secretary (in charge of Party organizational affairs). More initiative was shown, even in the Brezhnev period, by the editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, which in its post-1967 incarnation has functioned as a "socialist Hyde Park," i.e., a forum for airing diverse establishment opinions without committing the leadership to any of them. Its editors, headed by chief editor Aleksandr Chakovskii, have closer ties with the political apparatus than most, yet relations between *Literaturnaia gazeta* and the political authorities are complex. At times the top editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* have acted as the conduit for the Party apparatus; at times they have become embroiled in conflicting institutional or bureaucratic interests; and at still other times they have played the role of *enfants terribles* of the establishment intelligentsia, supporting bold staff members and testing the limits of critical publication.

## DISCUSSIONS, DEBATES, AND CONTROVERSIES IN SOVIET MEDIA

Centrally directed media campaigns and orchestrated pseudo-controversy are a central feature of the Soviet media system. So is a centrally directed division of labor among various media organs. The appearance of veiled polemics among them may be a "dosing" that is calculated as a function of each medium's intended audi-

ence. Different organs, for example, *Izvestiia* and *Krasnaia zvezda*, may sound slightly different notes on major issues of the day, but that does not necessarily mean that they are reflecting the contending views of different top-level groups. Rather, they may be slightly different parts in the same overall score, intended for different members of the orchestra. The most striking example, once again, is *Literaturnaia gazeta*, whose distinctive formula is the result of a conscious high-level policy to provide a safety valve for the expression of unorthodox and experimental views about Soviet society; some of its seemingly spontaneous discussions are mapped out and approved in advance.

Yet political currents within the Soviet elite may sharpen the image of a journal more than the leadership intended; such was evidently the case, for example, with the Russophile *Molodaia gardiia* at the turn of the 1970s. Moreover, journalists are not mindless marionettes, and even as they implement the mobilizational functions of the media, they can sometimes generate, from below, controversial material. Soviet media output is supposed to be interesting and critical, so that it can shape popular consciousness. The more high-ranking the journalist, the more he can influence his publication's formal planning process, and the more he limits himself to specific cases and avoids generalization, the greater initiative he can show.

However, the circle of journalist initiative has narrowed since the Khrushchev era; moreover, even in the best of circumstances, the energetic journalist risks blundering over hidden tripwires of leadership privilege and institutional sensitivities. Many articles are rejected or criticized because they happen to ruffle institutional feathers. In such cases, the interests of institutions or bureaucracies are at play, not in defense of specific policy positions but in a patrolling of the boundaries of their prerogatives, i.e., in preemptive lobbying. In recent years ministries have established press centers to support low-keyed active lobbying in the media. Open controversy among specialists is often sanctioned debate somewhat distant from immediate policy formulation. Some media debate may reflect institutional, bureaucratic, or policy conflict, especially on domestic socioeconomic issues, such as agriculture, energy, and cultural affairs. But it is questionable whether top-level discussion of very sensitive policy issues is reflected in the media; this has not been the case in postwar Poland.

Under the political conditions of the Brezhnev era, individual top political leaders have used the media for hidden partisan communication only in exceptional cases. (There are no known cases of such sparring among Polish Politburo members in the media except during the 1956 crisis.) The Brezhnev leadership appears to employ a clearance system for leaders' public utterances, and consequently any published item that bears the name of a leader can be assumed to have been reviewed by a central staff. Top leaders who have "violated the common trust" in Brezhnev's era at a time of evident turmoil in the management of the Propaganda Department—Politburo members Shelest, Shelepin, and Polianskii—have been punished or were in political decline. Under a consolidated leadership, if, for example, *Pravda* alters Brezhnev's words, it is probably because Brezhnev or the clearance system he devised has ordered the changes. If, to take another example, Kirilenko is dropped from a photograph montage (an episode discussed in Appendix C), this may be the result of technical error. During a period when discussion of policy issues became freer, *esoteric* communication no longer served the purpose it once did.

Some Western observers have discerned a stabilization or petrification of the Soviet political system under Brezhnev. If such consolidation outlasts Brezhnev, and if under the new rules of the game, leaders' pronouncements are subjected to greater collegial constraints, a revival of partisan esoteric communication is less likely than was the case in previous leadership successions. But if the Soviet political system has not changed fundamentally, the post-Brezhnev period may be expected to bring a revival of esoteric partisan communication, as intense power struggles break out and existing centralized controls on leadership utterances break down. Indeed, in the wake of Suslov's death and as Andropov, Chernenko, and others appeared to be trying to position themselves to succeed Brezhnev, some observers discerned just such a development. Yet the relative absence of esoteric communication in the Brezhnev period suggests that revival of such communication on any scale will require and signal more leadership division and disarray than has sometimes been assumed.

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE SOVIET PRESS**

Former Soviet journalists and professionals caution us against reading too much between the lines of Soviet media. Much controversy is sham, some is unrelated to policy or institutional interests, and some is at best a distant reflection of behind-the-scenes debate. Aesopian language no longer plays the role it once did. There is little basis today for esoteric communication on specialized issues, because such matters are discussed in technological and not ideological language; there is no longer a hidden message based on minute variations from a canonical language. Issues of policy import are presumably never thrashed out primarily in the media, but whether or not media debates are ever part of the real debate over a policy issue (a point on which there is contradictory evidence), media debate can serve the Western analyst as a useful indicator of behind-the-scenes controversy.

This study of Soviet media suggests several guidelines for Western interpretation. They are not "rules" but general propositions and questions the seasoned analyst should bear in mind as he follows the Soviet media (they should also help in training junior analysts). These guidelines should be tested further, through additional "methodological" studies and through more rigorous attention by practicing analysts to the assumptions inherent in their own work.

### **Use of the Media to Track Institutional/Bureaucratic and Policy Conflict**

How can we tell when a given media item is official policy (or the foreshadowing of a new official policy), advocacy by an interested institution or an individual with a hunting license, or simply a reflection of the deliberately differentiated "images" of various media organs? To take a concrete example, should an article by, say, demographer Perevedentsev in *Literaturnaia gazeta* discussing the maldistribution of Central Asian labor resources best be interpreted as a leadership trial balloon foreshadowing possible moves to reallocate Central Asian labor, Perevedentsev's own hobby horse, another of chief editor Chakovskii's exercises in estab-



lishment daring for the benefit of Moscow intellectuals, or the viewpoint of a "Central Asian labor" lobby?

The likelihood of media controversy signaling institutional or policy conflict can be judged against a series of plausibility tests:<sup>2</sup>

- *Importance and political sensitivity.* Individuals and institutions may debate relatively freely in the press if the subject is not politically or ideologically sensitive. Foreign affairs, for example, is likely to be a more sensitive topic than domestic policies. But the topics at hand may be of considerable importance, especially if they can be couched in technical or scientific terms; they may "pass" because they are considered so uninteresting as to be harmless.
- *Extent of leadership commitment.* Subjects on which no official policy exists are relatively more open to discussion than those on which the position of the leaders is clearly stated. The trend in recent years has been for political leaders to refrain from *ex cathedra* statements about subjects which in earlier generations would have been regarded as highly ideological.
- *Consistency of treatment.* Media statement or nuance cannot be considered as politically significant unless it is consistent with other information about the point of view of a given individual or institution, such as a series of similar statements on the same policy issue.
- *Technical feasibility.* Media contributions by individuals or institutions are less closely scrutinized than leadership statements, which makes it easier to communicate policy-relevant points of view. However, such contributions may be rewritten at different stages in the editorial process, and the final result may read differently from what the original writer or the official author intended. Consequently, one should not read such material as closely as one might the leaders' speeches; nor can one assume that minute differences in the statements of different ministries on the same subject are necessarily politically significant. Two or more articles on the same topic, appearing in different places within the same time period, are not necessarily connected to one another. Many factors determine the location of an article: For example, an author may choose to publish in an unusual place because the fee he receives is higher, not because he is siding with an institutional group connected with a given journal or newspaper.
- *Appropriateness of the channel.* A presumed message indicating a policy position should appear in an appropriate medium or forum: A statement at a Party Congress or other equally solemn occasion should be considered more likely to be a statement of policy than of advocacy. Similarly, media that are aimed at specific target groups for purposes of mobilization or propaganda (such as *Novoe vremia* or *Narody Azii i Afriki*) are less likely to carry partisan messages or to mirror internal conflict or group interests than specialized media devoted to technical discussion

<sup>2</sup> See the related analysis of William Zimmerman, "Distinguishing Advocacy and Policy in the Soviet Media: A Research Note," Discussion Paper No. 136, Institute of Public Policy Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, May 1979.

within a narrow group of experts. Some media are explicitly devoted to conveying "initiatives" from individuals which may have little intrinsic political significance (e.g., *Literaturnaia gazeta*), whereas others show little independent initiative at all (e.g., *Moskovskaia pravda*). Policy advocacy can usually be distinguished from policy by the fact that the former is confined to a limited number of media, whereas the inspired debate or campaign in support of a new policy will usually appear throughout the media.<sup>3</sup>

### Use of the Media to Track Leadership Conflict

The likelihood of media nuances indicating esoteric partisan communication can be judged on the basis of the following:

- *Timing.* In times of stable and unchallenged one-man leadership in which there is ample evidence of close control of the media, frequent rotation of media personnel, and central clearance of official utterances, the probability of partisan communication should be considered low.
- *Nature of the subject matter and likely target audience.* Policy subjects that are important and sensitive and media that are aimed substantially at foreign audiences are likely to be especially closely controlled by the top leaders' staff, and are therefore correspondingly less likely to contain esoteric partisan messages from anyone but the top leader himself. Foreign affairs coverage in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* is a case in point.
- *Consistency.* Episodes of seeming partisan communication should not be limited to single and isolated occurrences, but should form a distinct pattern extending over a period of time.
- *Visibility and decipherability.* To be effective as a partisan communication, a message must be seen and understood as such by its intended audience. The medium in which the message appears should be reasonably central; at the same time, the most authoritative sources, such as *Kommunist*, *Pravda*, and *Izvestiia*, are the most likely to be subjected to close top-level scrutiny. Unless "esoteric communication" is from the dominant leader, the most likely media outlets would be less visible, still major publications, with which individual leaders have a personal connection (as Shelepin apparently did with *Trud* in the early 1970s). The message should be clearly distinguishable from the medium: A "liberal" signal by a leader appearing in *Literaturnaia gazeta* or a conservative one

<sup>3</sup> It is not essential that all of the above conditions be met simultaneously to conclude that a particular media item indicates communication is taking place. For example, even a highly official occasion, such as a Party Congress, can be the place for advocacy if the other conditions are right. At both the 25th and 26th Party Congresses, the first secretaries of several of the Central Asian republics spoke out strongly in favor of projects to redirect part of the flow of Siberian rivers to the Aral Sea basin, clearly lobbying for more funding and a stronger official commitment to the idea. But their position was made possible by the fact that Brezhnev had been on record since 1976 as being in favor of the idea. Similarly, the President of the USSR Academy of Sciences can use the formal occasion of the Academy's annual meeting to take the state planning agency, Gosplan, openly to task for delaying funding for the construction of high-voltage, direct-current transmission lines from Ekibastuz to European Russia. ("Vstupitel'noe slovo prezidenta Akademii Nauk SSSR Akademika A. P. Aleksandrova," *Vestnik AN SSSR*, No. 5, 1980, p. 12.) What makes the latter action possible is that despite the bureaucratic warfare that has surrounded the project, it is one that Brezhnev has voiced approval of.

in *Oktiabr'* will be widely discounted by the intended audience, because of the distinct "images" of those publications. Minor differences in wording or rank orders, unless they involve ideological or protocol formulas that are universally understood and consistently followed, may be overlooked.

- *Technical feasibility.* Episodes of possible esoteric communication should square with what is known about the editorial process. Leadership actions that require explicit tampering with photos and text through the active connivance of media staff are less plausible than top-level manipulation. Unreasonable standards of technical perfection cannot be assumed; technical errors do take place, and the haphazard and accidental do creep into the press.

### Use of the Media to Monitor the Soviet System

The above guidelines suggest the importance of discrimination in the use of Soviet media as a tool for analyzing Soviet politics. The media do not provide an infallible guide to Soviet political life; nor are they simply propaganda organs unrelated to intra-elite controversy. Reality lies somewhere in between.

Media differentiation is not all related to high policy. Pseudo-discussions are organized and different images are assigned to individual media organs. Although Soviet journalists lack the autonomy achieved at times in the past by Polish journalists, initiatives on their part, both inadvertent and intentional, can make waves. Technical errors do occur and accidents do happen.

On the other hand, different viewpoints, implied values, and implicit preferences are expressed in Soviet media and can illuminate the agenda and perhaps some of the alignments in intra-elite discussions on policy-related issues. The context is important—in times of relaxation or leadership turmoil, the media reveal more about the Soviet system. Centrally directed media campaigns can amplify or presage leadership decisions. Journalists' initiatives can broach issues below the threshold of leadership sensitivity which illuminate the workings of the Soviet polity and society.

Although individual media organs do not "represent" large groups, specialized journals, while not responsive to relatively autonomous elite subgroups, as some Polish journals were in the past, may reflect specialist attitudes. Specialist discussions, albeit sanctioned, can provide insights into policy areas that remain open for the leadership and which it may have under active discussion. Bureaucratic interests may be manifested in preemptive or active media lobbying by ministries or other institutions. Media debate—especially on domestic socioeconomic issues, such as agriculture or energy, or cultural affairs—may, within the guidelines just suggested, reflect institutional, bureaucratic, or policy conflict. Such policy-related media controversy is more likely to be specific and explicit than esoteric. It is likely to involve interest groupings cutting across institutions, with any top-level involvement usually indeterminate, and should be understood as an imperfect reflection of (or perhaps an indeterminate contribution to) intra-elite policy debate. In periods of contested leadership, as suggested by the guidelines above, media nuances may indicate leadership conflict. Only in exceptional circumstances will a leader "own" a chief editor or otherwise "control" a medium; partisan esoteric communication is more likely to occur in leaders' utterances than in articles of proxies.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### ASSUMPTIONS OF WESTERN SOVIETOLOGY

For most Western observers of Soviet affairs, the open media of the Soviet Union are the main source of information, indeed often the only one. Yet the Soviet press is no ordinary press, and over the decades, Western analysts have developed working rules and assumptions aimed at extracting what meaningful information it may carry, intentionally or unintentionally. Those rules necessarily grew up through inference, because since the 1930s it has not been possible to look in any detail at the internal mechanisms by which the Soviet press operates.

The art of reading between the lines of the Soviet press grew up in the West during and after World War II, and by the early 1950s it had been formalized in works by Borkenau, Rush, Leites, and others.<sup>1</sup> Western analysts worked from the basic proposition that however totalitarian and centrally controlled Soviet society was, its media contained communications, both overt and latent, that if properly interpreted by outsiders could shed valuable light on the workings of the system. "Propaganda analysis," developed by the U.S. government during World War II to apply to Nazi Germany,<sup>2</sup> was further refined for the study of Communist countries. Western analysts sought to infer from the propaganda in the Soviet media information about the intentions and concerns of the Soviet political leaders. In particular, Soviet media were analyzed for their "signaling" content in the international arena. Beginning with the Soviet-Yugoslav dispute of 1948, and especially in the initial stages of the Sino-Soviet conflict, Communist media were closely watched in the West for their use as a principal instrument for the conduct of controversy between the Soviet and Chinese leaders themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Such uses of the media implicitly treated the Soviet leadership as a unitary actor. Though different media voices might be used to address domestic and foreign audiences, it was assumed that there was but one speaker. But could more

<sup>1</sup> Franz Borkenau, "Getting at the Facts Behind the Soviet Facade," *Commentary*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1954, pp. 393-400 (reprinted in Sidney I. Ploss (ed.), *The Soviet Political Process*, Waltham, Massachusetts, Ginn & Company, 1971, pp. 80-93); Myron Rush, "The Role of Esoteric Communication in Soviet Politics," in *The Rise of Khrushchev*, Washington, D.C., Public Affairs Press, 1958, pp. 88-94; N. Leites and E. Bernaut, *Ritual of Liquidation*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1954. Other key writings with explicit "methodological" discussions include William O. McCagg, "Communism and Hungary," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1965, Introduction; Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1962, pp. 24-35; Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1958, Chap. 19; Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966; William E. Griffith, "On Esoteric Communications," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1970; Sidney I. Ploss, *Conflict and Decisionmaking in Soviet Russia: A Case Study of Agricultural Policy, 1953-1963*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1965; Alexander Dallin (ed.), *Diversity in International Communism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1963, pp. xxv-xliv. In the past decade, a number of academic analysts have pioneered the use of quantitative techniques of content analysis, as distinct from the traditional "qualitative" approach. See Arnold L. Horelick, A. Ross Johnson, and John D. Steinbruner, *The Study of Soviet Foreign Policy: A Review of Decision-Theory-Related Approaches*, The Rand Corporation, R-1334, August 1973, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander George, *Propaganda Analysis: A Study of Inferences Made from Nazi Propaganda in World War II*, Evanston, Illinois, Row, Peterson & Co., 1959.

<sup>3</sup> See Zagoria; also William E. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1964.

than one speaker at times be discerned in the Soviet media? After Stalin's death, Western analysts began to pick up what they interpreted as echoes of differences and maneuvers among top political leaders. This use of the Soviet press was a return to an earlier tradition of analysis, which had originated in the Soviet Union itself. Before seizing power, the Bolsheviks had learned to couch their views, including their disagreements, in so-called Aesopian language, in order to get them past the Tsarist censors. In the 1920s and 1930s, as opponents of Stalin were denied the use of the press to voice their views, they returned to the technique of Aesopian communication, before disappearing altogether in the late 1930s.

There was nothing particularly subtle about the Aesopian language used through 1928, especially by Bukharin's followers, who did not hesitate to attack Stalinists by name.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, by the standards of latter-day analysts, their statements would be considered so obvious and blunt as not to be considered Aesopian at all. Moreover, behind the coded polemics there were newspapers that were publicly known to be loyal to particular factions, and therefore it was easy to infer the mechanism through which "partisan communications" could be transmitted. By early 1929, however, the rightist faction had been stripped of much of their uncensored access to the press. The conduct of the fateful struggle became so clandestine that it is very difficult, even now, for the historian to reconstruct what happened.

Beginning in the 1950s, as signs of rivalry among Stalin's successors appeared, Western analysts discerned a revival of Aesopian communication in the Soviet press, while historians, returning in hindsight to the last decade of Stalin's rule, applied the same techniques to find evidence of concealed political maneuvering among Stalin's lieutenants.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, many Western analysts moved outside classic Kremlinology to study the role of institutions, bureaucratic organizations, and policy and interest groupings below the very top level, both in the USSR and in other Communist countries. Largely deprived of the tools of analysis utilized with considerable success by their colleagues engaged in disaggregate analysis of policy-making in non-Communist countries, i.e., primary documents and retrospective interviews, Communist-country "bureaucratic conflict" analysts developed ears just as keen as those of the "Kremlinologists" for the possibly significant nuances in media output of the USSR and other Communist countries.

The art of reading between the lines, then, holds a time-honored place in the arsenal of working Sovietologists, but it has always been surrounded by controversy. "For the serious student," Robert Conquest once wrote, "the Kremlinologist is seen as someone appearing to speak in absolute certainties on the basis of cloudy figures swirling in his crystal ball."<sup>6</sup> Up to a point, of course, every Western student of Soviet affairs is a "Kremlinologist." Very few would not agree that, say, if *Izvestiia* and *Pravda* use consistently different wordings on some issue of moment, something significant is going on within the top leadership. Still fewer would question the significance of the consistently different public language used by Brezhnev and Kosygin on agriculture (in the late 1960s),<sup>7</sup> technology and de-

<sup>4</sup> See Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, New York, Vintage Books, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Conquest, *Power and Policy in the USSR*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1961.

<sup>6</sup> Conquest, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Werner G. Hahn, *The Politics of Soviet Agriculture, 1960-1970*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

pendence on the West (in the early 1970s),<sup>8</sup> and energy (in the late 1970s)<sup>9</sup>—all of which turned out to be connected to real shifts of policy. There is no disputing that systematic differences in tone and wording do sometimes occur in the Soviet media and are sometimes of significance as mirrors of intra-elite political debate.

But the chief issue that divides specialists is that of how much to rely on such differences. Is every minor shade of wording, every omission, every slight shift of emphasis loaded with political meaning? Is nothing ever accidental or random in the Soviet press? Is there no room for a directed "division of labor," for personal idiosyncrasy, or journalistic initiative? Some Western works of Kremlinology, such as those of Duevel, Ploss, and Tatu, seem to come close to saying just that. But other analysts take issue with such assumptions. Conquest, writing of the work of Borkenau, observed, "As it stands, [much of] it has put off a number of readers, really rather unfairly, by an air of omniscience which even the non-expert realizes cannot be seriously sustained."<sup>10</sup>

In short, there are long-standing disagreements among Western analysts over the most basic points of interpretation of Soviet media. Take, for example, the elementary question of whether the appearance of debate in the Soviet press actually reflects real controversies among Soviet decisionmakers. Dimant-Kass<sup>11</sup> argues, for example, that "... the debate and controversies to be discerned among the Soviet press organs constitute a faithful reflection of the actual debates taking place in closed forums." Few analysts would take issue with "reflection"; some would question "faithful." Press controversy is often viewed as the tip of the iceberg. Kolkowicz<sup>12</sup> argued: "In the Soviet Union it often happens that public discussion on sensitive and important issues breaks into print as an extension of private debates at higher levels, and that such articles serve as trial balloons for testing controversial views." The analytic literature generally ignores the "negative case," i.e., the possibility that some real controversy is not reflected at all in the media. A "maximum" case may also be postulated, in which the media debate is the only real debate, i.e., no significant component is carried on behind the scenes. Some Western studies of controversies among Soviet academic and research specialists imply such a "maximum case."<sup>13</sup>

Nor is there agreement among Western analysts on the issue of media-actor linkages, i.e., what media controversy may indicate about the identification of the actors involved in the "real" controversies. Zimmerman<sup>14</sup> flagged the problem "of ascertaining which views a particular statement may be taken to represent—those of an individual, an identifiable group within the Soviet Union, or the official position of the regime." His analysis of Soviet viewpoints on international relations

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Parrott, *Soviet Technological Innovation*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Jones, *The Politics of Soviet Energy Policy*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Department of Political Science, 1982.

<sup>10</sup> Conquest, p. 3. Borkenau wrote, "No formula is ever used accidentally in the Communist world ... Nor is there such a thing, either, as an accidental mistake" (Borkenau).

<sup>11</sup> Ilana Dimant-Kass, "The Soviet Military and Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1970-1973," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 26, October 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Roman Kolkowicz, *The Red "Hawks" on the Rationality of Nuclear War*, The Rand Corporation, RM-4899-PR, March 1966.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Franklyn John Griffiths, *Images, Politics, and Learning in Soviet Behavior Toward the United States*, Ph.D. dissertation, New York, Columbia University, 1972.

<sup>14</sup> William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations 1956-1967*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1969.



expressed "considerable misgivings about the ability to connect (or not connect, as the case may be) statements made by international relations commentators—political generalists and second-level specialists alike—to the Soviet political process." Noting evidently deviant positions taken by particular Soviet newspapers on a foreign policy issue, Spechler<sup>15</sup> posed relevant questions and emphasized the problem for analysis:

The question is, whose position are *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* articulating? Is this merely the stand two individual staff members want the regime to take? Is it the view of the editors of the two newspapers? Does it reflect the thinking of some important officials, and if so, which ones? Is there a sizeable group of people who hold this view? How powerful is this group? One cannot ultimately assess the political importance of divergent opinions unless one knows whose opinions they are, how large a part in the policy process is played by those who hold them, and how much political weight or leverage they possess.

Appendix B reviews a sample of Western analytic literature on the USSR in terms of explicit or implicit assumptions about these questions, especially the media-actor relationship.

## RESEARCH APPROACH AND SCOPE

At the root of the problems of interpretation just discussed, of course, is the fact that it has not been possible to have an inside look at the ways in which media material is initiated, processed, approved, and controlled. We could not look inside a Soviet editorial office to see what goes on there. Knowing only the output of the media, Western analysts inferred what they could about its meaning, but with only a vague idea about how it was produced.

Our hypothesis, in undertaking this study, was that a closer look at the communicators—and particularly at the relations between the press and higher political authority—would enhance the ability of Western analysts to draw useful inferences from the media. This required, in turn, a shift of attention from the *message* to the *medium*, that is, to the editorial and control processes. In order to understand *who* speaks through the media, it is necessary to understand *how* particular viewpoints get into print. We need to know who is involved, organizationally and personally, in the media process, whether and how the set of participants changes at different levels and in different issue areas, and whether the media themselves can initiate debate. Hopkins<sup>16</sup> flagged (but was unable to pursue) this issue in his study of the Soviet media. Citing the Soviet press debate of the early 1960s on economic reform, he noted:

We would know a lot more about the workings of Soviet society if we knew precisely, for instance, how a given article like Liberman's [*Pravda*, September 9, 1962] or Trapeznikov's [*Pravda*, August 17, 1964] gets into the Soviet press. Who suggests that Liberman or Trapeznikov write it? Who decides that such ideas as theirs should be opened to debate at a particular time?

<sup>15</sup> Dina Rome Spechler, *Domestic Influences on Soviet Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1978, pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union*, New York, Pegasus, 1970.

Rigby,<sup>17</sup> reviewing "Kremlinology," posed the same question:

Who determined, for example, what got published during the heavy industry-consumer goods dispute at the end of 1954, or during the discussion on Khrushchev's decentralization proposals in 1957? Clarification of the crypto-political functions of the press is one of the more urgent tasks for the student of Soviet politics . . . .

To gain insight into these questions, we conducted 63 extended interviews with former Soviet citizens who had worked in or contributed to Soviet media and analyzed the resulting respondent testimony, along with information from Soviet and other Western sources. (Details on our interview sample and procedures are contained in Appendix A.) Although our interviews provided information on literary and scholarly journals, foreign affairs journals, and radio and television, as well as the press, we were unable to include these media within the scope of our analysis; the emphasis in the present report is on newspapers.

We were concerned above all with the following issues: How are control and censorship exercised by the political authorities? How strictly and systematically are the rules enforced? How much accident, technical error, and unintended coincidence occur in Soviet media? How much room for initiative do Soviet journalists themselves have? How should we interpret what appear to be discussions, debates, and controversies in the Soviet media? To what extent (and by what mechanism) is the press used for the expression of institutional interests and the viewpoints of policy advocates? What basis is there for the belief that the Soviet press is used for esoteric communication to sub-elites by political leaders? Are media people themselves aware of such communication, and do they connive in it?

A few words about our study's limitations: To answer fully the questions we have just raised would require direct access to people much more highly placed than our respondents were. The loftiest positions occupied by anyone in our sample were those of managing editor, department chief, and middle-level official; none occupied a responsible political post. Although our respondents had worked on important Moscow dailies, we did not have access to anyone who had occupied a responsible position in *Pravda* or *Izvestiia*. (The level of access of the respondents in our related study of Polish media was much higher; they included chief editors and officials of the censorship office and Party apparatus.<sup>18</sup>) Even the highest-ranking and most experienced among our Soviet respondents had limited contact with the staff of the Party Central Committee. Such contact is typically the private business of the editor-in-chief. Consequently, our respondents had only second- or third-hand information about the Politburo and the Party Secretaries.

This restricted access means that our respondents are of limited help in answering some of the Sovietologist's key questions. Our respondents would not have known directly of efforts involving, say, a top leader, chief editor, and Central Committee Propaganda Department and/or Glavlit officials to publish a partisan viewpoint. Section IV examines the possibilities for top-level intervention in the media process, based on suggestive but not conclusive testimony. Nor did respondents know how leaders' speeches and articles are processed for publication by the

<sup>17</sup> Thomas H. Rigby, contribution to symposium, "Kremlinology," *Survey*, Vol. 50, 1964, pp. 154-194.

<sup>18</sup> Our Soviet respondents also could not tell us much about limited-circulation media publications, which play a major role in intra-elite communication in Poland.

Central Committee apparatus and the staffs of the Politburo members. They can and do testify to the extraordinary care with which official speeches and photos are handled once they are received by the press, but the newspapers' main concern at that stage is to make sure that the version transmitted to them by TASS is printed exactly as it is received. Thus this report does not consider published leadership speeches as a possible vehicle for individual leaders' expression of differentiated policy views or for intra-leadership political conflict.<sup>19</sup>

Over half of our sample (32 respondents) were experts, advisors, or officials. Their testimony, along with that of the journalist-respondents, provides some evidence about the nature of discussions, debates, and controversies in Soviet media. Section IV considers such media debates and their relationship to institutional, personal, and policy conflict, emphasizing the experiences of journalists. It proved impossible within the scope of this study to analyze specialized media discussions or debates in a number of areas about which émigrés are knowledgeable; foreign affairs and economics discussions appear to be particularly promising topics for future research.

The interviews were designed to tap our respondents' media-related experiences, especially their first-hand knowledge of the media process; interviews were not standardized but emphasized the unique experience of each respondent. Critical analysis of interview information began in the interview itself, guiding questioning by the interviewers, all specialists in Soviet affairs. Some readers may impute systematic biases to our respondents, because they left the USSR, because most are Jewish, or for other reasons. We have sought to minimize such potential distortions by emphasizing first-hand experiences and first-hand knowledge of facts, by critically evaluating respondent testimony, and by comparing related experiences of respondents across our sample (of which 23 percent were non-Jews).

Of course, respondent experiences cannot be divorced from respondent interpretation; some respondents were as concerned with trying to explain the Soviet system as with relating their specific experiences with the media. And on some points, we were interested in how respondents read, as well as contributed to, Soviet media. So we have necessarily had to use our judgment in interpreting respondent views, as well as respondent experiences.

Many émigrés were puzzled by some of the questions we asked. The Soviet journalist leaves the Soviet Union as a musician might leave a concert hall after a deafening evening of loud military music. His ears still ringing from the official bombast, he lands in the West to find Western analysts glued to their headsets, listening intently to the concert he has just left. To his astonishment, they disregard the thumping official melody line as hardly worthy of interest; instead they appear fascinated by a range of higher harmonics and subtle sounds that they claim are real but that the émigré may not hear at all—muted controversies, muffled conflicts, and whispered opposition. He cannot believe these exist, because, after all, he was one of the musicians and those notes were not in the score. And

<sup>19</sup> We located émigrés who wrote articles and speeches for lower-level officials but were unable to interview them within the scope of the present study. George Breslauer interviewed 33 émigrés familiar with the process of writing local Party committee (*obkom*) secretaries' speeches and articles. He found that, although usually drafted by others, these speeches and articles "reflect the interests and orientations of party secretaries, as these secretaries want them to be expressed publicly at the time." (George Breslauer, "A Research Note," *Soviet Studies*, July 1981, pp. 446-447.)

besides, how could they possibly compare in significance with the overwhelming reality of that massed orchestra, blasting away to a captive audience? To be sure, the émigré admits that one hears an occasional off-note, but these he ascribes more to accident than to design.

In evaluating the testimony of our respondents, we have had to bear in mind the fact that they are Soviet journalists and specialists and not Western social scientists. The Soviet intellectual often thinks of power and politics in a different way from the Western analyst; and consequently he has quite different ideas about what is important politically. Western Sovietology reflects the preoccupation of Anglo-American political science with empirical case studies of *policy* as revealing indicators of the flow of power. As a result, Western analysts are apt to see "politics" in what to a Soviet intellectual's eyes is merely technical detail. Add to that the Soviets' predilection for scandal and rumor about personalities, and one can see why the Soviet intellectual and the Western analyst, as they read the Soviet press, are likely to find different things.

We are inclined to weigh our journalist-respondents' views on use of the media for policy controversies cautiously, since journalists were not necessarily part of the "informed" audience that follows detailed technical issues. Respondents who were non-journalist professionals readily indicate that specialists often do contribute to policy debates, but they argue that this occurs in private channels more than in public writings, which Soviet specialists themselves often do not take seriously. While this may indeed be so, we note that even if communication is not his real goal, a technical expert, by his choice of topics and words, is hard put *not* to reflect a point of view. This can be helpful to the outside observer, even if not to the "insider" with better sources of information, in understanding the system. The implication of these points for our study is important: Just because the Soviet journalist or specialist did not see in the papers or journals he read or contributed to what the Western analyst sees does not necessarily invalidate Soviet media as a useful source for Western analysts.

These limitations and caveats notwithstanding, our respondents give us something unique. They were inside the "black box" of Soviet media. They were daily on the receiving end of the rules and orders issued by higher authority, and it was their business to turn them into words and pictures in print. They wrote and edited. They were part of a network of media professionals and experts. They know better than anyone else how much latitude they had and how much initiative they could show. They know the difference between real controversy and mere pseudo-debate that is launched and manipulated from above. They know who among them was fired or reprimanded and why. They spent their professional lives cultivating a nose for political intrigue, which made them sensitive to cases of unusual intervention in the editorial process. In sum, they were familiar watchers of political power in its daily application to the media; and they can tell us how the rules work in practice and how they may have changed over the last two decades. Their experiences must be critically evaluated, but they should not be ignored.

Above all, our respondents are well placed to remind us that the Soviet media system, despite the extraordinary political controls under which it operates, is nevertheless made up of people. As such (to preview later discussion), it is more complex, changing, and diverse than standard Western rules of interpretation usually allow for. It is consequently also more unpredictable and prone to accident. As

we shall see, a Soviet newsroom is far from a gray collective of journalistic automatons who never make a mistake or take a chance or venture a thought of their own, and whose talents and individuality are stamped into perfect uniformity by the machinery of Party control and censorship. On the contrary, Soviet journalism turns out to be a gossipy and quirky world as full of variety of personalities as its counterpart in the West.

In Section II, we shall review the mechanism of Party and state control over Soviet media, in which formal censorship in fact plays a secondary role. Section III looks at the crucial role of the chief editor and the editorial processes he presides over. Section IV analyzes types of discussions, debates, and controversies in Soviet media and considers their relationship to institutional, personal, and policy conflict. It examines the issue of top leadership intervention in the media process. Appendix A contains a fuller description of the study approach. Appendix B provides a selective review of media-related assumptions in a variety of Western Sovietological writings. Appendix C examines a presumptive "doctored photograph" incident. Appendix D provides a profile of one of the seemingly unorthodox Soviet journals, *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

## II. EXTERNAL CONTROLS

### INTRODUCTION

In this section we review the mechanisms by which the leadership controls the Soviet media. The basic structure of control is similar to that which governs every other sector of Soviet life. But does that mean that they operate in exactly the same way? Some Western Sovietologists have argued that in the last fifteen years, the flow of power and authority in Soviet administration is more complex and subtle than may appear on formal organization charts; and they have suggested considerable modification of the traditional model of totalitarian control. The following are some of the propositions around which there has been active research and controversy in Western Sovietology in recent years:<sup>1</sup>

- Both controllers and those they control have a stake in the success of their common enterprise; the controllers may identify with the controlled, even to the extent of entering into conflict with higher political authority on their side.
- At various times the controllers and the controlled may change places, each serving a tour in the job of the other, and as a result they may form common views and personal sympathies.
- The specialist has considerable latitude in the way he executes standard policies. As a result, in some instances he can have an unexpected amount of influence.
- The controller of specialists must have a measure of technical expertise, and along with his specialized knowledge he may absorb some of the specialists' attitudes and values as well.
- In specialized fields, initiatives often come from below, even if official approval and formal initiation must then come from above.
- Patterns of promotion of specialists can become institutionalized and professionalized, with less evidence of ideological criteria and political clientelism than existed a generation ago.
- Policy in specialized fields is made on more pragmatic and less ideological grounds than was the case a generation ago.
- In fields that are not directly connected to sensitive political questions, rules and procedures are becoming more predictable and less arbitrary, more systematically tied to established procedure, allowing all players to develop more stable perceptions of what is expected of them and what rewards and penalties they face.

<sup>1</sup> See Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1979; Peter H. Solomon, Jr., *Soviet Criminologists and Criminal Policy: Specialists in Policymaking*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1978; Thane Gustafson, *Reform in Soviet Politics*, Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1981; Martin McCauley, *Khrushchev and the Development of Soviet Agriculture: The Virgin Land Program 1953-1964*, London, Macmillan, 1976; M. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths (eds.), *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1971. A useful list of basic requirements for an effective watchdog organization were formulated by Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston, Massachusetts, Little, Brown, 1967, pp. 148-151; those requirements are developed in an insightful way in Colton.

Do any of these propositions apply to the Soviet media? In the subsections that follow, we shall begin to address this question by describing the basic structures of control.

## PARTY SUPERVISION

From industrial plant newspapers to central press, radio, and television, the Communist Party apparatus sets the general policies and directs the work of the Soviet media. Although formal authority for media belongs to specialized State Committees for the printing trade, television, radio, and cinema, actual control and supervision are the job of the Party apparatus, perhaps to a greater extent than in any other sphere of Soviet life. Designed to ensure that the public word promotes only the policies of the Communist state, the web of Party controls governs all aspects of Soviet media: administration and financing, information and entertainment, ideology and moral teaching. This is accomplished in a number of ways. The Party allocates the media's resources and appoints loyal editorial managers. Party organizations decide the extent of operation of every media organ, appoint its key personnel, and control the content of its output. Party officialdom can restrict or completely deny media access to authors and performers who have incurred its displeasure, while providing opportunities to those it favors.

How is the Party's control implemented? Is there any indication that the relationship between the control apparatus and journalists and editors involves mutual dependencies? If so, do those dependencies affect the content of the media? We begin with the key roles of the Central Committee Politburo and Secretariat, based on such descriptions as our respondents have been able to provide and on information contained in Soviet and Western sources.

### Politburo and Secretariat

Institutionally, the Party's hierarchical structure determines the particular media responsibilities for each level of Party organization. At the highest level, the Politburo decides overall media policy, including organizational structure and top personnel appointments. An illustration of formal Politburo involvement is its appointment of a special commission in 1978 to prepare recommendations for improving ideological work and media performance.<sup>2</sup> An example of its informal, behind-the-scenes involvement was its prior approval of publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.<sup>3</sup>

The Politburo *nomenklatura* (personnel appointment and control system) includes appointments of the top media officials in the Party supervisory structure as

<sup>2</sup> At the November 1978 Central Committee plenum, Brezhnev reported that the Politburo had recently discussed criticism leveled at the media for failing to tackle effectively current economic and social problems. Brezhnev also complained about the state of international affairs reporting and commentary. He announced that the Politburo had formed a special commission to examine all these questions and decide on measures to improve ideological and mass-political work (*KPSS o sredstvakh massovoi informatsii i propagandy* (*The CPSU on Mass Information and Propaganda Means*), Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, pp. 549-550). The new Central Committee International Information Department had just been established in early 1978, and in April 1979 the Central Committee adopted a comprehensive resolution "On Further Improving Ideological and Political-Educational Work" (*ibid.*, pp. 344-358).

<sup>3</sup> A. Solzhenitsyn, *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (*The Calf Butted the Oak*), Paris, YMCA-Press, 1975.

well as in the media themselves. Respondents formerly active in Soviet central media circles maintain that the chief editorships of *Pravda*, *Kommunist*, *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* (*International Affairs*), and the international Communist journal *Problemy mira i sotsializma* (*Problems of Peace and Socialism*) are Politburo *nomenklatura* positions. They also report that a "Central Committee Secretary or Politburo member can be involved" in the final confirmation of editorial appointments in the leading institute journals.

Senior Politburo member and Secretary M. A. Suslov long held top responsibility for the ideological integrity of the media. Several respondents described him as head of the "Ideological Commission" but provided no further details. Below him, a Central Committee Secretary supervised propaganda and ideology affairs. Formerly chief editor of *Pravda*, M. V. Zimianin has held this post since March 1976. Politburo candidate member P. N. Demichev supervised the cultural media within his general responsibility as the USSR Minister of Culture; earlier, as Central Committee Secretary, he probably supervised media affairs more extensively between the ouster of Il'ichev as Secretary in 1965 and his own demotion in November 1974.

Some respondents believe that Suslov approved media statements originating in the Politburo. He gave final approval of publication of leadership speeches, and both he and General Secretary Brezhnev approved major foreign policy articles prepared at Politburo direction, including those appearing in *Pravda* under the pseudonym I. Aleksandrov. One respondent stated:

I don't know how it is being done, but I think that the people who prepared Kosygin's speech and the people who prepared Brezhnev's speech are basically the same people. There is Brezhnev's office and there is Kosygin's office, but I think that for such very important occasions as a Party Congress, there is an editorial committee which makes certain decisions on nuances [in the speeches]. I think that it is Suslov who is a decisionmaker on such problems, because the final copy of the text goes to Suslov, and Suslov works on it as the editor-in-chief. He incorporates those nuances.

Together with B. Ponomarev and K. Rusakov, Central Committee Secretaries in charge of the International Department and the Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries, respectively, Suslov directly supervised the editors of *Kommunist*, the Party's leading periodical. Intermittently, he monitored such journals as the intelligentsia-oriented *Literaturnaia gazeta*. Several respondents maintained that Suslov played a central role in resolving behind-the-scenes controversies over top officials' involvement in media handling of ideological issues, as in the case of former Politburo member Polianskii's reported support for the Russophile writer Shevtsov in 1970-1971 (see below). But our respondents could not help to illuminate the process by which the Politburo and Secretariat "clear" the public pronouncements of their individual members.

The Party's top executive organ, the Central Committee Secretariat, some members of which are also in the Politburo, supervises the media for the top leadership. An interviewee described the Secretariat's role as follows:

The Propaganda Department receives its instructions from the Secretariat of the Central Committee which always handles problems through the chiefs of the departments of the Central Committee. The Secretariat looks after a whole rank of departments. The Secretariat is the higher authority



over these departments. A department will get invited to a conference, and the Secretariat personnel will ask questions if something is not clear. They will say, "This is how this has to be done."<sup>4</sup>

Respondents maintained that some personnel appointments are confirmed at the Secretariat (as opposed to Politburo or Central Committee Department) level.<sup>5</sup> The Secretariat also reportedly controls leadership use of the media. One well-placed respondent stated that media appearances or interviews of state ministers also invariably require the Secretariat's (presumably collective) clearance:

Not a single secretary of the Central Committee has the right to come out in the Soviet press without his article being checked by the Secretariat of the Central Committee. An interview with Dymshits [deputy chairman, USSR Council of Ministers] for the press had to be sent, after it was finished, to the Central Committee, because [the publication] did not have the right to publish that interview without the agreement of the Secretariat. This is a general condition.

We could not clarify how the Secretariat's media responsibilities have been distributed among Suslov's office, the Secretary directly responsible for propaganda and ideology, and the Secretaries in charge of other policy areas. The observable role of the Secretary in charge of propaganda and ideology has varied over time. Under Khrushchev, L. F. Il'ichev, who since 1958 had been head of the Central Committee Department for Propaganda and Ideology, or Agitprop, was promoted to Secretary in 1961. He had a prominent role as Khrushchev's principal spokesman on ideology and the arts, at a time when de-Stalinization encouraged Soviet intellectuals to challenge restraints on their freedom of expression. At the same time, P. N. Demichev was appointed Central Committee Secretary, with responsibilities in the cultural field. Following Khrushchev's ouster, Il'ichev was removed as Propaganda Secretary in 1965, while Demichev was promoted to candidate membership in the Politburo in November 1964. Demichev remains in the Politburo, but he was relieved as Secretary when he became USSR Minister of Culture in November 1974. In March 1976, M. V. Zimianin, chief editor of *Pravda* since 1965, was elected Secretary and assumed responsibility for propaganda and ideology.

Both Zimianin and Il'ichev had had prior experience as chief editor of *Pravda*. Both were senior officials in the Foreign Ministry after 1953, becoming deputy

<sup>4</sup> Occasionally, official decrees disclose the extensive prerogatives of the Secretariat-run central Party apparatus in media management. The March 6, 1966, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) resolution on newspaper and broadcasting editorial staffs states, *inter alia*: "Decisions on founding new republic, territorial, province, city, district, state agency, and branch newspapers, as well as on changes in size, frequency of papers' publication, honoraria, staffs, and editors' rates of pay come into force after their confirmation by the CC CPSU." (*O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati, radioveshchani i televidenii* [On Party and Soviet Press, Radio Broadcasting, and Television], Moscow, Mysl', 1972, p. 362.) The extent of Central Committee involvement can be seen from the following directives addressing individual media organs. On pp. 301-303—confirming editorial staff appointments and the size and circulation of *Voprosy istorii* and *Literatura i zhizn'*; p. 454—DOSAAF Publishing House; pp. 324-326—a 1959 directive setting content guidelines for the government paper *Izvestiia*; pp. 460-463—Foreign Literature Publishing House; pp. 485-489—a 1967 directive on the content and editorial staff members of the third edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.

<sup>5</sup> Soviet officials, interviewed by a U.S. journalist, acknowledged the Secretariat's extensive prerogative in the appointment of key personnel both inside and outside Party organizations (Ned Temko, "Soviet Insiders: How Power Flows in Moscow," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 23, 1982, pp. 12-13). Temko also cites several Moscow editors, reporting that they and other prominent media figures frequently participate in the weekly Secretariat sessions.

foreign ministers in 1965. Service with the Foreign Ministry was part of the careers of other top officials in the media as well, including the Central Committee International Information Department head, L. M. Zamiatin; the chairman of the State Radio and Television Committee, S. Lapin (who served as Soviet Ambassador to China from 1965 to 1967); his predecessor, N. Mesiatsev; and the former Central Committee Propaganda Department head, V. Stepakov. As discussed below, the Foreign Ministry has considerable control over international affairs publications. If these men are considered the top "watchdogs," it is clear that their careers span many years of service in the organizations whose media affairs they now oversee. There is no particular sign, however, that their loyalties as watchers are in the least divided by competing allegiances to the watched.

We know little about the specific responsibilities of the Propaganda Secretary, although respondents stated that these include supervising Glavlit, the censorship agency. Zimianin regularly participates in meetings with Communist-country or non-Bloc "progressive" delegations, and he delivers keynote speeches at major domestic and Soviet bloc conferences on ideological and media questions.

The vagueness of our respondents' information on the Politburo and Secretariat reflects their own relatively modest standing and their lack of working contact with the upper levels of the system. In contrast, they are more specific about the operations of the Central Committee departments that are directly responsible for Soviet media.

### Propaganda Department

Responsible for implementing the Party's public information and propaganda policy, the Central Committee Propaganda Department directly supervises all central press organs and broadcasting media. The propaganda departments of Party organizations from republic to district committee (*raikom*) level extend this control to media throughout the country.

While other Central Committee departments are involved in media affairs, only the Propaganda Department has special sections for publishing houses, journals, and newspapers. It is the dominant department vis-à-vis the media. Other departments participate in deciding what information the media will present in their own areas of competence, but our respondents maintained that the Propaganda Department usually retains the final say.

Charged with mobilizing public opinion, the Propaganda Department has extensive authority as the overall administrator of Soviet media. It handles personnel matters, disseminates directives on content, allocates financial resources, coordinates information inputs, and monitors media performance. No respondent had first-hand knowledge of Department activities from inside, but several had dealt with the Department in clearing material for publication. Their testimony, along with information previously available,<sup>6</sup> allows us to outline its operations.

The Propaganda Department is apparently one of the largest departments in the Central Committee apparatus, although precise data about its size are not

<sup>6</sup> Gregory Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 18-22; M. Dewhirst and R. Farrell (eds.), *The Soviet Censorship*, Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, 1973; Leonid Vladimirov, *The Russians*, New York, Praeger, 1968, pp. 86-91; and A. Pravdin, "Inside the CPSU Central Committee," *Survey*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Autumn 1974, pp. 94-104.

available. Respondents maintained that the Department's staff numbers several hundred.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, if one bears in mind that the Department's jurisdiction covers the entire Soviet media, even a staff of several hundred is too small to ensure more than superficial coverage. If that is the case, then how close and detailed can the supervision of the Propaganda Department be? The problem of supervision must be especially acute concerning highly specialized and technical material. In dealing with a flood of material, the Propaganda Department evidently employs four strategies: (1) the Department relies on advice and rulings from other departments of the Central Committee apparatus or ministries; (2) it delegates much of the day-to-day supervision to reliable chief editors of the media; (3) it relies on Glavlit, which it appears to control; and (4) it practices selective coverage, focusing on the most important areas and issues, relying on strict punishment to discourage overstepping the limits.

Top management of the Department has changed with changes in the top Soviet leadership. Thus, in 1965, after Khrushchev's fall, V. I. Stepanov was appointed head of the Propaganda Department. In 1970, Stepanov was removed (and posted as Ambassador to Yugoslavia) under circumstances that remain unclear; thereafter the Department lacked a permanent head until 1977, when Tiazhel'nikov was appointed. A. N. Yakovlev, the first deputy head, served as acting chief from 1970 until April 1973, when he too was removed, apparently under a cloud. A new first deputy head, Smirnov, was appointed only in September 1974. This personnel turnover in the Propaganda Department in the early 1970s remains to be explained; it may have weakened the Department's control at the time and, as noted in Section IV, may help account for some unusual developments in the media (including three apparent cases of top-level leadership intervention) at the time.

**Editorial Appointments.** The Propaganda Department has an important voice in top editorial appointments. Appointments of central press chief editors and top management of publishing houses require approval by the head of the Propaganda Department before they are confirmed at the Secretariat level. Editorial board appointments in the central press also require Department approval, which is issued at the section head level. The Department also plays a role in appointments of chief editors of Moscow city newspapers, and possibly those of other local papers as well, even though in practice the actual nomination is made by the propaganda department of the Party city committee (*gorkom*). Chief editors of the republic-level press must receive a Department recommendation before they can be confirmed by the leadership of the republican Party.

In many cases, the Department has first-hand knowledge of the appointees' qualifications, having previously dealt with them as staff members or practicing journalists. Chief editors, in particular, have frequently worked in the Propaganda Department at some time during their earlier careers. In Section III, we give some specific examples of chief editors' careers and the circumstances of their appointments by the Propaganda Department.

**Directives and Supervision.** The Department provides regular liaison between the leadership and media editors. The head of the Department reports to the

<sup>7</sup> *Directory of Soviet Officials, Volume I: National Organizations*, Washington, D.C., Central Intelligence Agency, September 1978, pp. 28-30, identifies 99 professional employees of the Department. Of these, 43 are listed as "instructors." A Polish respondent with first-hand knowledge claims that in the 1960s the Department's staff numbered 300.

Central Committee Secretary in charge of propaganda and ideology. The Secretary's staff, in turn, keeps the Department informed about the latest policy decisions. In biweekly instructional conferences, the Department informs the senior editors of the central press of current policy developments and provides guidelines for media coverage. At these meetings, Department representatives also critique press performance during the preceding period. Several times a year, assisted by *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* staff, the Department runs professional workshops for newspaper department editors from all parts of the country. A former editorial staff member of a republican paper recalls attending a series of these workshops:

Branch conferences for staff members of the industry and transport departments [of newspapers], for instance, are organized regularly. They take place in Moscow, in *Pravda* editorial offices, or the Journalists' Union, or at the Propaganda Department. Central Committee instructors and press sector workers are always present, as are *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* editorial staff members. Under Khrushchev, a workshop for heads of industry departments instructed them how to present material on the new economic planning system. Liberman, one of the system's authors, lectured for several hours. When the audience told him that they had difficulty following such a lecture on economics, Liberman laughed: "Well, that's not so serious in the case of you, journalists. You still grasp enough to present the material. What's much worse for us is that plant managers do not as yet understand what is involved." There were also workshops for managing editors at the Journalists' Union, where very thorough instruction was given, for example, on how to prepare newspaper layouts. It was very interesting. . . . Every journalist wants a trip to Moscow, it is sort of a reward. But the invitations come from there: from the [Propaganda] Department head, or the Journalists' Union.

One of the most important questions about Soviet media concerns the extent to which the different tone and coverage of different newspapers and journals are deliberately "programmed" from above by the Propaganda Department or other bodies in order to reach specific audiences with specific messages, or whether, on the contrary, the variety we observe from one newspaper or journal to the next is somehow a "spontaneous" reflection of the special concerns of the "constituency" that specific media "represent." Respondent testimony suggests that the answer is a bit of both, but more of the former than the latter. "*Pravda* is the newspaper of record," they say, and therefore its statements are the most authoritative but also the most cautious.<sup>8</sup> The same is true of *Kommunist*; a respondent described the publication in *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir* of an "anti-Ceausescu" article that was considered too "strong" for *Kommunist*. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* is aimed at youth and frequently carries more interesting, "sharp" material, for which it has a specific "license" and which is understood not to represent the full official position of the Party.<sup>9</sup> *Trud*, the official organ of the labor unions, has emphasized anti-

<sup>8</sup> Consistent with this point is the finding that *Pravda* occupied a middle position in the spectrum of Soviet press and journal coverage of the "lessons" of Vietnam. See William Zimmerman and Robert Axelrod, "The 'Lessons' of Vietnam and Soviet Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, October 1981, p. 9, as reviewed in Appendix B.

<sup>9</sup> During the 1960s, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had a reputation for recruiting talented writers and giving them latitude to print more frank stories than other newspapers. According to one of our respondents, who worked for that newspaper for several years, this was deliberate policy on the part of the Central Committee, because the newspaper was intended for youth. This emphasis on youth showed up in a number of ways, including the newspaper's own staffing practices: There was an informal rule that

Semitism. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (described in Appendix D) sometimes serves as a forum for airing new social and economic issues (such as the proper role of defense lawyers) that are below the threshold of political sensitivity; it is also used to publicize international topics (such as a picture of a "peaceful" Sino-Soviet border in 1969) when publication in *Pravda* or *Izvestiia* would impart too much authority.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes the directives to individual organs are quite specific: The Department issues "exact instructions," according to several respondents, setting forth which publications are to present certain material.<sup>11</sup> *Trud* was directed to publish specific anti-Zionist articles, for example. Former staff members of *Literaturnaia gazeta* recalled that at times the Department supplied finished articles to be published in the paper, including an article denouncing Solzhenitsyn. A Baltic respondent noted that the Propaganda Department directed the Lithuanian Radio to avoid Moscow broadcast formats (as too insensitive to local conditions). In addition, every issue of every Soviet newspaper contains certain materials understood to be "compulsory" (*obiazatel'nye*), in the sense that the newspaper must print them exactly as they have been received, usually over teletype from TASS. The room left for initiative of individual media organs is small—but not nonexistent. A centrally directed division of labor notwithstanding, individuals and political currents or groupings can influence the profile of a media organ.

Supervision of the general press is the responsibility of Department staff members, usually of *instruktor* rank, who are assigned as *kuratory* (i.e., monitors) of individual press organs, and sometimes of a group of related publications. A former Moscow editor captured vividly the style and status of a Department *instruktor*:

Let's say that I am chief editor in Lithuania. I may even be a deputy of the Supreme Soviet. But my real chiefs are very young people called "instructors" in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee. These "instructors" will never be members of the Supreme Soviet. But they are my chiefs. They will be very polite with me; it's the style; they are not like in Stalin's time, but nevertheless they are my chiefs and I get orders from them. I never know whether the instructors devise these directives or whether they simply transmit them. They speak on behalf of the Central Committee as a unified entity, even if their message represents the personal opinion of only one member, or even if it is a mistake.

One of the functions of the *kurator* is to give an advisory opinion on whether a given topic or line of discussion is likely to be acceptable. On potentially sensitive

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writers and editors could not stay beyond the age of 35 to 40. Because of regular turnover, the staff of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was younger than that of most Soviet newspapers, and that fact in itself, combined with the stress on recruiting talent and maintaining a high literary standard, accounts for much of the newspaper's liveliness and relative originality in those days. But our respondent stressed that those were secondary causes; the main element in defining the newspaper's overall image, he was convinced, was the explicit policy of the Central Committee. This image contradicts the notion of the paper as a hard-line mouthpiece, as is assumed in several Western studies reviewed in Appendix B.

<sup>10</sup> It should be possible with additional interviewing to develop a typology of media roles, as well as of specific media formats (*Pravda* editorials, "Observer" articles, etc.). We obtained some information on the latter in the course of our study. A typology of Polish media roles is presented in Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, pp. 26-36, "Differentiated Media Roles."

<sup>11</sup> Respondents made it clear, however, that such instances were an exception to the regular practice of Party control and indirect direction.

articles, editors can consult the *kurator*, who either resolves the question or refers it to other Central Committee departments. (This is not an ironclad guarantee that no harm will befall the chief editor; as we shall see below, no amount of consultation will save the chief editor if he does not have a good political nose. But the protective value of such consultation is undoubtedly one reason why the chief editors of Soviet central newspapers are said to spend a portion of each day at Central Committee headquarters.) The *kurator* checks regularly what is published in "his" newspaper or journal and generally provides feedback to the editors. When other Central Committee departments raise objections to what has been published, the *kurator* conveys these to the editors and sets up meetings between them and other Central Committee department representatives, when necessary. For example, in one case that we were told about, the *kurator* for *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir* summoned one of that journal's contributors to Central Committee headquarters and took him along to the Science Department to clear up a question. Officials there proceeded to criticize statements in the contributor's recent article. By the same token, when other departments want material to appear in the media, they usually have to go through the Propaganda Department. Thus, a respondent related, the Industry Department would call the Propaganda Department if it wanted a certain ministry criticized in the press. The Propaganda Department would then call the chief editor of the appropriate newspaper and ask him to do the story.

Propaganda Department *kurator*y or monitors are also assigned to specialized publications, such as journals of the Academy of Sciences and the trade press of the legal and agricultural professions. In practice, parent institutes or agencies of such publications are subordinated in their day-to-day operations to the corresponding Central Committee department, which also concerns itself with their publications. The political sensitivity of copy material appears to determine the extent of the Propaganda Department's authority in the specialized press. One respondent observed that in legal journals and the agricultural press, the specialized Central Committee departments are "more involved" and have "greater influence" than the Propaganda Department. This may well be true in the case of most "technical" questions and technical publications, but it also suggests that the jurisdictional lines between Central Committee departments may in some cases be hazy, creating the potential for conflict among Central Committee departments and possibly some openings for chief editors to take advantage of the differences among them. The latter seems too dangerous a game to be worth the minute victories it might bring, but some of our respondents expressed the belief that instances of it do occur.

An important test of the relations among Central Committee departments in media matters is international affairs coverage, which, although politically and ideologically sensitive, is increasingly recognized by the regime as having important technical aspects that require specialized knowledge and some degree of professional independence. Thus one might expect muted tugging and pulling between the International and Propaganda Departments of the Central Committee; at least, such struggles probably occurred in the days before the International Information Department was created. Some of our respondents believe that this did happen. One of them characterized the "complicated relationship" of the Propaganda and International Departments in the international affairs institutes of the

Academy of Sciences as a division of labor in which the Propaganda Department supervises institute publications and propaganda, but the International Department exercises control over institute day-to-day activities. He defined the role of the Propaganda Department *kurator* as a formal one, deriving primarily from the Department's responsibility for personnel and administrative management. Other respondents, however, claimed that the *kurator*'s responsibility is to evaluate the impact of foreign affairs articles on the domestic audience.

Articles that have already passed the scrutiny of the International Department and the Foreign Ministry's press department may still be stopped by the Propaganda Department.

Thus, according to a former editor of an institute journal, articles on China are first cleared in the International Department and the Department for Liaison with Socialist Countries for correct "political direction." Then the article is sent to a special China section in the Propaganda Department, which issues final approval, demanding changes it deems necessary from its perspective of overall domestic propaganda impact. The China section, which was headed in the mid-1970s by S. Morozov, formulates, in this respondent's words, the "mass propaganda policy" on China, "orchestrating" the appearance of articles in the popular press and issuing final approval on those published in academic journals.

The process of preparing publication plans for the journals of the Academy's international institutes also involves the Propaganda Department in its role as overseer. One of our respondents said that in the Institute of the International Workers Movement (whose journal is *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir*), it is the Propaganda Department that is the immediate source of directives and "suggestions" for the journal's editors as they prepare their publication plans. After initial approval by the institute's director, the plans go directly to "Ponomarev's office," i.e., the International Department, then to the department handling socialist countries, ending up in the Propaganda Department for final collating and approval. In the course of their regular duties, the journal's editors deal mostly with the International Department, but for publication plans they must obtain final approval from the Propaganda Department, "because it leads in matters of ideology." As this example suggests, the Propaganda Department consults extensively with other Central Committee departments about media matters.

**Funding and Circulation.** The Propaganda Department decides newspaper and journal budget allocations and sets their circulation size. There is an interesting inconsistency in our respondents' comments about circulation and the attitudes of the Propaganda Department toward it. On the one hand, they insist that circulation is the last thing the Central Committee is concerned about. But they also believe that the Central Committee is naturally concerned about reaching its audience and will occasionally go to considerable lengths to do so, as they did in designing the special formula of *Literaturnaia gazeta* to reach out to intellectuals. In some instances, income from circulation is of direct concern to the organization that is technically in charge: *Literaturnaia gazeta*, for example, because it belongs to the Union of Writers, which is said to derive substantial revenues from *Literaturnaia gazeta* and *Novyi mir*, its two main properties. Respondents also attribute the rise and decline in circulation size of some major newspapers to the editorial policies and capabilities of successive chief editors. In the 1960s, there was evidently a policy of appointing chief editors who would make the news interesting;

but in the last ten years, the stress has been on political reliability instead, even at the expense of sacrificing circulation.

### **Other Central Committee Departments**

Several of the twenty-three specialized Central Committee departments participate regularly in decisions concerning the media. Mass-media treatment of current developments in foreign policy, economics, or science requires specialized competence, for which the Propaganda Department seeks and obtains guidance from the functional departments. Responsible for implementing Party policy in their assigned areas, these departments must also ensure that the media properly serve their particular policy concerns. They accomplish this not only by interacting with the Propaganda Department, but also by advising central and specialized media editors directly.

With regard to the interaction among the various Central Committee departments, accounts of cases related by our respondents suggest two broad patterns. First, patterns of authority and precedence within the Central Committee do not seem tightly fixed. Controversy among the departments, when it occurs, is likely to be settled ad hoc by appeal to the Secretaries or even to the Politburo. This view is consistent with the familiar Soviet pattern of referring a large number of decisions to higher authority, and it helps to account for what our respondents described as a certain unpredictability in the Central Committee's reactions from case to case.

The second broad theme that emerges from our respondents' testimony is that high-level supervision of international affairs, particularly in the Central Committee apparatus, is much more detailed and strict than that of most ordinary domestic affairs. The staffs of the Central Committee in the international departments appear larger, more professional, and more prominently active than their colleagues in, say, departments devoted to energy or metallurgy. One of our respondents described the situation this way:

Only specialists work in the International Department. They don't have anyone who five years ago was secretary of the Party cell in an industrial plant and then became a staff member of the International Department. They select country specialists very carefully. Because almost all information about every country is channeled to the institutes and the International Department, these are very competent people, with detailed knowledge of the situation in the country [of their specialization].

Several of my friends, after graduating from university, worked for a time in the Committee to Defend Peace and the Committee for Solidarity of the Countries of Asia and Africa. Since these public organizations have close ties with the International Department, the probability was always high that their employees would become staff members of the Department.

Let me reiterate that the International Department has the best staff in the Party Central Committee, in terms of composition, level of education, and degree of knowledgeability. . . . The International Department constantly strengthens the cadre of the Foreign Ministry with its own personnel.

Our respondents also suggested that media coverage of foreign affairs is much more carefully and elaborately coordinated among the various offices and bureau-



cratic players than is that of ordinary questions of domestic policy. This implies that Soviet media are much more likely to speak with one voice in foreign affairs than in domestic, and consequently the Western analyst is less likely to find truly competing points of view—to say nothing of contending institutional opinions on major matters—in that area than in any other.<sup>12</sup>

We turn now to a more detailed description of the role in media supervision of the main Central Committee departments concerned with international affairs. Following that, we shall discuss the other Central Committee departments that our respondents described as active in media affairs.

**International Department.** Responsible for implementing Party policy toward Communist and radical movements in non-Bloc countries, the International Department supervises publications and research in its policy area. The most striking testimony from our respondents about the journals of the international institutes concerned the very close supervision and control maintained by the Central Committee International Department. Some interviewees went so far as to say that the institutes' affiliation with the Academy of Sciences was more form than substance, and that the institutes should actually be considered subordinate offices of the Central Committee.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, some respondents claimed that the Institute of the International Workers Movement works almost exclusively for the Department. The Department guides research and publication activities also at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEIMO), the Institute of the USA and Canada (IUSAC), the Far East Institute, the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, and the Institute of Oriental Studies. The Department regularly engages top specialists from these institutes as its consultants. Its own staff, said to number about 150, consists of well-educated and competent country specialists, "not mere apparatchiks." Active in Soviet organizations for cultivating international contacts, such as the various peace and solidarity committees, staff members stay well attuned to public opinion and political situations abroad.

The International Department issues directives to the media, but the nature of these directives remains unclear. According to one respondent, the Department receives evaluations of international developments prepared in "brain centers" associated with different Politburo members and utilizes these, together with other information, to prepare its media directives. Both TASS and Novosti receive specific Department directives on how to handle particular events, and Novosti is told what to promote in foreign media. Respondents' accounts indicate that the Department sometimes orders publications to print certain material. It reportedly in-

<sup>12</sup> This finding does not necessarily contradict Western analyses showing that a degree of diversity is reflected in Soviet coverage of foreign affairs. But it does suggest reappraising some of the conclusions. Our respondents asserted that the Central Committee maintains a larger capability for central control over foreign affairs coverage than over domestic coverage, and that it exercises that control more closely. Not only is there a more clearly defined line in foreign affairs than in domestic, but it is more rigorously applied. Consequently, we would question the suggestion of Zimmerman and Axelrod (to take an example) that one can infer from differences between *Pravda's* coverage of Vietnam and that of other newspapers that "in 1973 Brezhnev was somewhat ahead of other members of the Soviet ruling group in advocating improved U.S.-Soviet relations, and that his position was not merely reflecting a consensus within the leadership." We would suggest greater emphasis on the *planned* diversity in the "missions" of different newspapers and journals, depending on their authoritativeness and audience.

<sup>13</sup> A dozen interviews dealt with the international institutes, but a full analysis of their role was beyond the scope of this study.

spired articles by Ernst Genri which appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta*<sup>14</sup> and arranged for *Novyi mir* to publish liberal writer Vasilii Aksenov's account of his trip to the United States.<sup>15</sup>

The Department controls the editorial policy of the international Communist journal *Problemy mira i sotsializma* and its English-language version, *World Marxist Review*, published in Prague. It also appoints leading staff members. The editorial board of *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir*, published by the Institute of the International Workers Movement, includes a deputy head and two staff members of the International Department. One respondent claimed that the Department also decides the topics to be addressed in the academic journal *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (MEiMO) and has strong influence in the foreign affairs weekly *New Times*. One former editor characterized International Department editorial control as follows:

The International Department keeps an eye on all these journals, but the general direction is determined by the Propaganda Department. It's a complicated system. The Propaganda Department can make no decision about a given journal or its specific subject matter: it checks up on basic facts, clears up specific problems. The other is done by Ponomarev's office. He has constant charge of the kitchen. He determines the political line, the content, and everything else. But the article could not be published without the Propaganda Department because the Propaganda Department leads in all matters of ideology. The Propaganda Department can influence an article from the point of view of general directions.

Another respondent described the close connections between academic specialists and the staff of the Central Committee's International Department on issues of Japanese affairs (this arrangement presumably has the effect of reducing the role of the Propaganda Department in shaping what appears in public print on Japan). In the late 1970s, the International Department maintained a staff of four Japan specialists, under a sector chief named Senatorov. The overall head of the Far Eastern area is I. I. Kovalenko, who is himself a specialist on Japan and who has been working in this area for thirty-five years. Like other sectors, the Japan sector uses institute personnel as consultants, including I. A. Latyshev, chief of the Japan Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies; D. V. Petrov, his counterpart at the Far Eastern Institute; and V. B. Ramzes of IMEIMO. Some of the institute specialists have previously served in foreign posts as correspondents. Latyshev spent five years as Tokyo correspondent for *Pravda* after completing his *kandidat* degree at the Institute of Oriental Studies, and then served another tour in the same spot in the 1970s after he had completed his *doktor* degree and had become head of the Institute's Japan department.

<sup>14</sup> Genri is the pseudonym of senior Soviet international affairs commentator Semen N. Rostovskii, who published on the Hitlerite threat in the 1930s and is best known in recent decades for his dire analyses of developments in West Germany and China.

<sup>15</sup> Vasilii Aksenov, "Kruglye sutki non-stop (24 Hours Nonstop)," *Novyi mir*, No. 8, August 1976, pp. 51-122. Aksenov's story, we were told, was published over the vigorous objections of the Propaganda Department. This case was cited by our respondents as an illustration of the fact that, seeking to project a more appealing image of the USSR for foreign policy purposes, the International Department is more inclined than either the Propaganda or Culture Departments to approve publication of liberal writers. The Propaganda Department is also said to prefer these writers to their conservative colleagues for representation on trips abroad.

Analyses of institute journals can be highly topical; the Central Committee at one time instructed the Institute of Oriental Studies to establish a study group for Islam and to publish articles on the subject in its journal, *Narody Azii i Afriki*.<sup>16</sup> But respondents' accounts of Central Committee direction of the international institutes are, we believe, only part of the story. The policy-relevant activities of institute specialists appear to consist primarily of direct consulting, not published articles. But a certain proportion of each issue of the institutes' journals is devoted to scholarship that the Central Committee is bound in most cases to consider remote or unimportant. Visiting Soviet scholars have insisted on the "academic" nature of most of the work that goes on in Soviet international institutes and have claimed that much of the content of institute journals originates from below and is published without elaborate clearance from higher authority. Former institute researchers we interviewed offered similar testimony.

The International Department does not have exclusive authority over any of the foreign affairs publications, according to our respondents. The Propaganda Department sets the "general direction" of their content and reserves the right of final approval of articles. The Propaganda Department is the *kurator* of *Rabochii klass* and participates in approving the journal's publication plans. As was noted above, several departments share responsibility for clearing articles on China. At *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* (*Soviet Oriental Studies*), published during 1955-1958 by the Institute of Oriental Studies, editorial policies were decided by two departments concerned with foreign affairs. (This was a period of transition, when Malenkov's power eroded and Khrushchev started his ascendancy to power.) Department requests for editorial articles in the journal were made in an informal manner. Usually, a phone call from the interested section recommended covering a certain topic. The editorial board assigned the task to an institute specialist and then edited his article. Often, but not always, the article was sent to the Central Committee for prepublication review.

A word here about coordination with the USSR Foreign Ministry (although we deal in greater detail with the role of ministries in a later subsection): The USSR Foreign Ministry, said our respondents, also has control over articles published in organs where the International Department otherwise exerts strong influence. Major articles in *New Times* require Foreign Ministry approval to ensure correct handling of the diplomatic aspects. Supervision of articles dealing with arms control and disarmament illustrates the division of responsibility: The Foreign Ministry reviews articles on SALT, while the International Department reviews those dealing with peace movements abroad. Several respondents characterized the relationship between the two agencies in controlling media output on international affairs as one in which "Foreign Minister Gromyko has the power to decide on foreign policy articles, except when they involve relations with Communist or leftist movements. Then Ponomarev decides." However, journalists believed that International Department section head I. Kovalenko could wave aside Foreign Ministry objections to an article at *New Times*, and that Ponomarev would back him up.

**Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries.** Headed by former Brezhnev aide K. V. Rusakov, this Department

<sup>16</sup> In a ceremony honoring the Institute in 1980, Ponomarev encouraged it to work on Islamic issues (*Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 1, 1981, p. 6).

participates in approving the content of articles on Bloc countries and China. Some of our respondents said that the Propaganda Department retains final approval of articles on China, but others pointed out that Rusakov himself is an expert on China. The head of the Liaison Department's consultant group has been a member of the editorial board of *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir*,<sup>17</sup> and the Department nominates candidates for the editorial staff of *Problemy mira i sotsializma*. Moreover, some information from our respondents suggests that the Department is not always consulted on prepublication editing of articles about Bloc countries: On one occasion, we were told, a *New Times* issue, already printed, had to be withdrawn when the Socialist Countries Department objected to some aspects of an article on Romania. This case and others suggest a process of consultation among Central Committee departments characterized by *soglasovaniie*, i.e., sequential sign-off, in which each department has what amounts to a veto over controversial material that comes to its attention.

**International Information Department.** Since February 1978, this department has taken over major responsibility for presenting information on international events to domestic and foreign audiences. Headed by former TASS chief L. Zamiatin, the International Information Department staff includes V. M. Falin, formerly Soviet Ambassador to Bonn, and V. I. Kobysh, former Washington correspondent of *Izvestiia*. The Department has quickened Soviet media response to events abroad and improved foreign news reporting. Our respondents left the Soviet Union before the activation of the Department and could offer no additional information on it. A former foreign correspondent claimed that Department representatives journeyed abroad to instruct TASS correspondents in sharpening the interest and style of their dispatches. He stated that leadership concern about widespread dissatisfaction among Soviet intelligentsia with international news reporting led to the establishment of the Department (Brezhnev's expression of concern at the November 1978 Central Committee plenum was noted above).

Department chief Zamiatin previously acted as Brezhnev's press secretary, accompanying him on trips at home and abroad. Zamiatin has strong Foreign Ministry ties, having served as its press secretary until 1970. Both Zamiatin and Falin often give major interviews to foreign media on current international developments.<sup>18</sup> Kobysh writes on Soviet-U.S. relations in *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

**Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy (MPA).** Like the international affairs media, the military press also operates under Central Committee control. The MPA functions with the status and prerogatives of a CPSU Central Committee department ("rabotaet na pravakh otdela TsK KPSS") and has its own propaganda and agitation board:

The MPA is in charge of (*rukovodit*) the central military newspapers, journals, and the publishing houses, which are within its purview; it controls the content and ideological direction of the entire military press; it publishes political and literary-artistic journals, authorizes the publication of educational-methodological handbooks, manuals and posters on political

<sup>17</sup> This sort of membership is apparently not uncommon for the editorial boards of journals, whereas those of newspapers usually draw their members exclusively from the editorial staff.

<sup>18</sup> Soviet officials told Ned Temko that Zamiatin and Propaganda Secretary Zimianin prepared the Soviet statement responding to President Reagan's announcement that the United States will start producing neutron weapons (*The Christian Science Monitor*, February 24, 1982).

and military education questions, and participates in the work of creating training and art films on military themes.<sup>19</sup>

Central Committee resolutions on press activity have on a few occasions expressly mentioned *Krasnaia zvezda* along with other central papers. A March 1961 Central Committee resolution dealt with the work of Voenizdat, the military publishing house.<sup>20</sup> However, two former Soviet military journalists discounted the ability of the Propaganda Department to influence the MPA. Instead, they emphasized the MPA's freedom to direct its own affairs and the personal influence of its chief, General A. Yepishev, in military media:

Yepishev has usurped all power in the area of ideology relating to the army. All military newspapers and all military publishing houses are subordinate to Yepishev.

The MPA's prerogative to manage the military press is illustrated by its regular use of the Defense Ministry newspaper *Krasnaia zvezda* to communicate instructions to the military press and criticize the performance of individual journals and newspapers, including professional military journals less directly influenced by the MPA. Such articles usually are unsigned or are authored by a top MPA official. Sometimes the reader's remarks format is used to convey caustic criticism, as in an article cautioning *Vestnik protivovozdushnoi oborony* (*Anti-Air Defense Herald*) to guard more closely against mistakes appearing in its articles because of authors' uncritical attitudes toward military-historical works published in the West.<sup>21</sup>

We do not know how the MPA's propaganda and agitation board interacts with the Central Committee Propaganda Department or the Secretary in charge of propaganda. Nor do we have information on how the MPA relates to professional military organs in publishing matters.<sup>22</sup>

While stressing the Party discipline of MPA cadres, one respondent also depicted them as a distinctive element within the Central Committee:

The department of propaganda in the Defense Ministry is the instrument of the Central Committee. But it is also the instrument of the military, not simply the Central Committee. These are military people. They carry out the policy of the Central Committee, but they are really military people. . . . I knew some military people from this department who worked with military media. They held a military point of view. . . . The people in this department are very Russian-chauvinist, more so than regular people in the Central Committee.

Some of our respondents expressed the belief that the military leaders would like to have exclusive control over all substantive military-related material ap-

<sup>19</sup> *Sovetskaia Voennaia Entsiklopediia*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, pp. 562-563.

<sup>20</sup> *KPSS o Vooruzhennykh Silakh Sovetskogo Soiuza; dokumenty 1917-1968* (*The CPSU on the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union; Documents 1917-1968*), compiled by K. U. Chernenko and N. I. Savinkin, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1969, pp. 363-364.

<sup>21</sup> Major General of Artillery A. Sherstiuk, professor, "A Reader's Remarks: Vexing Inaccuracies," *Krasnaia zvezda*, September 12, 1979, in Joint Publications Research Service, *USSR Report: Military Affairs*, No. 1496, February 14, 1980, pp. 57-58.

<sup>22</sup> Polish respondents with military publishing backgrounds stressed that professional military journals were not heavily influenced by the MPA in Poland. See A. Ross Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The Role of Military Journals*, The Rand Corporation, N-1514/3, December 1980.

pearing in the media. One of them claimed that Defense Minister Ustinov in recent years exacted a commitment from the Central Committee that popular publications would not be allowed to print any major material about the armed forces or military doctrine. In this way, the armed forces leadership can reserve to its own media the right to discuss military affairs. Respondents pointed out that by monopolizing the flow of military information, the military media, more than other specialized media, represent a "voice" of their institution and its leadership. But political control of military media is enhanced by the requirement that all military publications intended for public distribution pass final Glavlit censorship. All material concerning the military is first cleared by military censors (see below), but they do not have the authority to give final publication approval.

**Culture Department.** Several respondents had dealt with the Culture Department, which has general responsibility for literature and art. The Department conducts periodic meetings of the editors of "thick" or literary journals, informing them of the latest Central Committee "interests." Solzhenitsyn described how Culture Department functionaries directly supervised *Novyi mir* during the Khrushchev era.<sup>23</sup>

Our respondents reported that *Literaturnaia gazeta* published articles for which it secured approval in the Culture Department. When the chief editor of the literary journal *Iunosť* disagreed with the censor, he turned to the Culture Department. However, a former novelist observed that newspaper and magazine editors generally deal with the Propaganda Department, while writers themselves interact with Culture Department officials.

Sometimes editors and authors manage to publish controversial material in the literary journals by adroitly exploiting disagreements among the Culture, Propaganda, and International Departments. Yet a former editor maintained that chiefs of propaganda departments—at Central Committee as well as lower Party committee levels—can at any time order editors to ignore Culture Department recommendations for or against the publication of any material.

**Department of Science and Educational Institutions.** The Science Department supervises academic institutes and also various research institutes outside the Academy of Sciences, but it does not have the same authority over institute publications as it has over the institutes themselves.<sup>24</sup> Noting that "the structure of the political control of the institute only partly coincided with that of journals, not entirely," a former researcher characterized publication control as a "very, very complicated and multilevel structure." Former staff members of Academy institutes generally noted that from two to four departments, including the Science and Propaganda Departments, checked articles prior to publication, but

<sup>23</sup> Solzhenitsyn. Khrushchev's short-lived reorganization of the Party apparatus subsumed the Culture Department under an umbrella Ideology Commission between November 1962 and November 1965. See Edith Rogovin Frankel, *Novy Mir: A Case Study in the Politics of Literature 1952-1958*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 129-131.

<sup>24</sup> A former institute researcher described the Department's administrative control over the institutes as follows:

Central Committee Science Department people control and check any movement within an Academy of Sciences institute. This was the situation when the Institute of Sociology was reorganized in 1972. Before the reorganization, a special commission from the Central Committee Science Department worked inside the institute, interviewing about the situation. After two months' work, they prepared a big report for the Central Committee. The former director of the institute was ousted and a new director appointed.

most were unsure of the precise division of responsibility between the departments. Editors of Academy of Sciences scientific institute journals regularly stay in contact with Science Department *instruktory* assigned to them. But these *instruktory* decide "concrete," technical questions only,<sup>25</sup> while the Propaganda Department supervises the administrative affairs of the journals. Publication of scientific books is approved jointly by the Science Department, the responsible division of the Academy of Sciences, and the corresponding state committee of the Council of Ministers. The specialized Central Committee departments are also consulted regarding their views on publishing a particular work.

Popular press editors sometimes turn to the Science and Education Department for approval of technical material and stories about science and scientists, but this is apparently not an ironclad rule. As examples, we were told that the science editor of a Moscow newspaper would phone the Department *instruktor* to review an interview with a member of the Academy. An article on new advanced generators developed at an Academy institute required Science Department approval, because it was deemed to involve "general and important questions." The science editor at *Izvestiia* consulted with ranking Science Department functionaries only when in doubt about a particular story. The science department at *Literaturnaia gazeta*, when express permission was required for an article, contacted only the Academy of Sciences, not the Central Committee. Other science journalists in Moscow similarly relied on Academy of Sciences approval, although their articles usually concerned local scientific institutes and required only city or district Party committee staff approval.

Several respondents who had dealt with the Science Department commented favorably on the qualifications of its staff, noting that they were better educated than the functionaries of the Propaganda Department. On the other hand, Department staff also have their biases: A former Moscow science journalist claimed that deputy chiefs of the Department rejected his request for approval of articles defending scientific institutes undeservedly criticized by ministries, because, as former Party *raikom* secretaries, they favored industry, not scientists.

**Administrative Organs Department.** The Administrative Organs Department monitors journals in the legal field. Substantive articles on law and court matters require Department review. Hence a former Moscow feuilletonist, who normally dealt with a Propaganda Department *instruktor*, was referred to the Administrative Organs Department when his story argued a legal point of view. The Propaganda Department declined to take responsibility for approving or rejecting the story, leaving the decision to the Administrative Organs Department. In this case, deferring to the functional Department was almost certainly due to the latter's particular responsibility for supervising the sensitive area of internal security.

The Administrative Organs Department collaborates with the General Department in compiling open publications of Party documents, notably those dealing with the Armed Forces.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> However, one reported case suggests that the Department also oversees political-ideological aspects of social science literature: An institute journal author who had prepared a report on a Soviet-East European social scientists' conference was called to the Science Department, where officials berated as politically mistaken his definition of the concept of "quality of life."

<sup>26</sup> *KPSS o Vooruzhennykh Silakh Sovetskogo Soiuzu*, 1969, and a 1981 volume under the same title, also published by Voenizdat, which covers the years 1917-1981. The recent volume is part of the "Officer's Library" series.

**Planning and Finance Organs Department.** This Department oversees the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), which publishes the economic journal *Planovoe khoziaistvo* (*Planned Economy*). The Department's role in major controversies involving this conservatively oriented journal remains unclear. In a 1972-1973 controversy over mathematical economics, spurred by *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, a *Pravda* article criticized the Gosplan journal's hostile stance toward mathematical modeling in economic planning.<sup>27</sup> An émigré economist rejected the possibility that the *Pravda* article, signed with a pseudonym, was sponsored by the Planning and Finance Organs Department. However, there are other indications that at times Department officials do use the Party media to promulgate innovative concepts.<sup>28</sup> Another former economist stated that all *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, and Central Television presentations on major economic questions are inspired or approved by the Department. B. I. Gostev, chief of the Department, prepares general annual directives regarding economics themes to be developed in the media.

**General Department.** Our respondents could not provide information on the General Department's involvement in media. But they repeatedly ascribed to Brezhnev the responsibility for reinstating uniformity and "greyness" in the media, which had diminished in the less constricted atmosphere of the Khrushchev era. In fact, former Soviet journalists' perception of the General Secretary's personal stamp on media paralleled the observation of leading Western Sovietologists that the General Department has come to play a more active role in the media.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> In a broad attack on Soviet proponents of mathematical economics, *Planovoe khoziaistvo* published three articles by economist A. Kats in its July (No. 7), September (No. 9), and October (No. 10) 1972 issues. Kats criticized several well-known Soviet economists for "borrowing the general concepts of vulgar bourgeois econometrics." In the May (No. 5) 1973 issue, I. Belik and Ia. Kronrod joined the attack. A brief article signed by I. Solov'ev, entitled "Strange Position," appeared in the June 4, 1973, *Pravda*, reproaching the three authors for their articles and defending the targets of their attack.

<sup>28</sup> In one case, the publication was the Party's theoretical journal, *Kommunist*, and the author, a deputy chief of the Department. The article, tagged as a discussion piece by the editors, advocated changes in the economic incentive system (Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1979, pp. 438, 645-646).

<sup>29</sup> Originally established to serve as the chancery of the Central Committee, the General Department was transformed into Stalin's personal secretariat, run by Stalin's personal secretary A. N. Poskrebyshev. Under Khrushchev, the Department reverted to an unobtrusive role, in keeping with its main responsibility, that of handling Party documents and records. Department Chief V. N. Malin edited the annual collection of Party documents, *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, and served on the secretariat of CPSU Party Congresses. But Malin never acted as Khrushchev's assistant, nor did he edit any of Khrushchev's published works (Leonard Schapiro, "The General Department of the CC of the CPSU," *Survey*, No. 21, Summer 1975, pp. 58-59).

The Department's identification with the General Secretary grew stronger after Konstantin Chernenko, a close associate of Brezhnev since the early 1950s and a former Agitprop official in Moldavia, became Department Chief in 1965. While several other departments can match the General Department in continuity of leadership since 1965, none have seen the same remarkable ascendancy on the ladder of power of their chiefs. Elected a candidate member of the Central Committee in 1966 and a full member in 1971, Chernenko became Party Secretary in 1976 and a full member of the Politburo in 1978. The visibility of the Department's involvement in publishing official documents and speeches has greatly increased, with Chernenko or his departmental subordinates appearing as editors of various collections of Party documents. In 1974, Chernenko broke precedent when he was listed as "responsible for publication" in a volume of Brezhnev's speeches, a credit heretofore reserved for the General Secretary's personal aides (Schapiro, p. 60). Significantly, the volume presented Brezhnev's speeches on political indoctrination and inaugurated an ideological crackdown which took place in 1974 (L. I. Brezhnev, *O kommunisticheskoi vospitanii trudiaschchikhsia: Rechi i stat'i* (*On the Communist Education of Working People: Speeches and Articles*); a second, enlarged edition was published in 1975). Since 1974, the annual *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, now edited by Chernenko's first deputy, K. Bogoliubov, no longer bears the Glavlit censor number. Neither did a Bogoliubov-edited 1979 collection of CPSU documents on mass information media, whereas a similar volume, published in 1972 by the Higher Party School, did show the censor's insignia.



### Regional Organs<sup>30</sup>

Regional Party organizations supervise the regional media. Republican Party committees control republic-level newspapers and journals; *oblast* (province) Party committees (*obkoms*), the *oblast* newspapers; and city Party committees (*gorkoms*), the city press.

Regional literary journals and broadcasting media have at times presented controversial material, and some Western analysts have speculated that the local press may be more open and liberal than the central press, because the circulation of local media is smaller.<sup>31</sup> Interviewees reported that district (*raion*) newspapers and industrial in-house publications (*mnogotirazhkas*) examine local problems relatively openly. But on the whole, our respondents maintained that the regional press is more restricted than the central press, because local Party organs tend to be very conservative and Party officials intervene more often and more directly in media management. In particular, the regional media are prevented from advocating local policies that do not conform to those of Moscow.

Several respondents with Central Asian experience agreed that Kazakh First Secretary Kunaev had "protected" the Russian-language literary journal *Prostor*, permitting it to publish unorthodox articles in the 1960s, but they regarded this case as exceptional. Ukrainian First Secretary Shelest apparently fostered nationalist writings in the Ukrainian-language press, and this was one of the factors involved in his ouster from the Politburo in 1973.

Editorial appointments at republic-level media and, according to some respondents, also at *oblast*-level, are generally centrally controlled by the Propaganda Department. Mindful of their career prospects, editors ensure that regional media serve the immediate needs of the local leadership in conformance with policies set in Moscow. Party discipline and career interests similarly motivate Party committees to enforce orthodoxy in their media. Moscow reinforces the authority of local Party organs over media by holding them directly responsible for media performance. If the Central Committee Propaganda Department wants editorial policies corrected—for example, in cases where nationalistic views have surfaced in a republican paper—it does so by pressuring the republic Central Committee to take action rather than by dealing with the local paper directly.

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Some major media policy decisions implicitly bear the aegis of the General Department, most notably the cancellation of the Khrushchev-era policy of publishing the stenographic proceedings of Central Committee plenums. The volume for the March 1965 plenum was the last one published. Chernenko and his Department played a major role also in the media decisions implemented in 1979. In his November 1978 speech, Brezhnev announced that letters critical of ideological and informational work had prompted the formation of a Politburo commission to deal with the problem. It was Chernenko's General Department that had handled letters and complaints submitted to the Central Committee. (In 1979, a new department was created to take over this function.) Moreover, Chernenko had repeatedly publicly extolled the importance of this channel of information in policymaking ("Trade-Union Newspaper Encourages Open Discussion of Workers' Complaints," *Radio Liberty Research*, 401/81, October 7, 1981, p. 5). He had also previously advocated concepts that now were incorporated in the 1979 Central Committee resolution on ideological work (*Soviet Leader Chernenko: An Emerging Political Profile*, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS Analysis FB 79-10019, August 10, 1979).

<sup>30</sup> This subsection draws on an earlier draft by S. Enders Wimbush. The brief overview it presents of regional media could have been enriched by the testimony of many other regional journalists known to the authors, but such interviews were not within the scope of the project.

<sup>31</sup> Ronald J. Hill, *Soviet Politics, Political Science and Reform*, White Plains, New York, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1980, notes that provincial publishing houses have released controversial reform proposals by Soviet political scientists (p. 149).

In addition, the local press does not get the best reporters; these gravitate to the major Moscow papers. A talented essayist, like *Izvestiia's* star correspondent A. Agranovskii, who has mastered the fine art of dealing with controversial topics in a way that is acceptable to the authorities, will not waste his skills in a provincial town. In Moscow the pay is better and there is more scope for originality and initiative.

The limited range of what the regional press is allowed to cover further restricts its potential to present independent views. National and international events are covered by TASS or other centrally disseminated news sources, which supply the local press with copy, some of which they must print without alteration. Regional press reporters cover only events and activities occurring within the jurisdiction of their supervising agency or below, unless, of course, instructed otherwise by higher authority.

Of the controls operating in local media, former regional press journalists and editors stressed two in particular: the procedure for editorial appointments and the prerogatives of the regional Party committee specialized departments.

Chief, deputy, and managing editorships at republic- and *oblast*-level newspapers are *nomenklatura* positions and appointees are nominated from the *nomenklatura* of their respective Party organizations. Nominations of republic-level media chief editors also must receive the endorsement of the all-Union Central Committee Propaganda Department before they are confirmed by the republic Central Committee bureau. The CPSU Propaganda Department approves the chief editors for republic Komsomol media as well. Editors of *oblast*-level newspapers are confirmed by the republic Central Committee, but at least one former editorial staff member of an *oblast* paper reports that the nomination of his chief editor had to be approved by the CPSU Central Committee. Editors of city and district (*raion*) media require confirmation by the next higher Party organization, i.e., *obkom* and *gorkom*, respectively. But chief editor appointments for Moscow city newspapers require Central Committee Propaganda Department approval and then are confirmed by the Moscow *gorkom*.

In supervising the regional media, Party authorities are especially worried about any manifestations of "wildcat" nationalism. As an example, an article recommending that only Tadzhik-language signs, and not Russian, be posted in the city appeared in the republic's Tadzhik-language newspaper *Tadzhikistan Sovety*. Soon thereafter, the chief editor was removed for permitting it. His removal was engineered by a staffer in the republican propaganda department, a former deputy chief editor of the paper who coveted the position of chief editor. This man brought the published article to the attention of the Second Secretary of the republic, a Muscovite, as being too nationalistic. Another respondent makes the general observation that city paper editors strive to please the Party committee, knowing that *gorkom instruktory* covet editorial positions and will take advantage of an editor's mistake to get his job.

Respondents from different republics gave us slightly different pictures of the regional propaganda departments' prerogatives in clearing media material. The evidence illustrates the different activities of the republican propaganda departments but does not permit general conclusions. Like their all-Union counterpart, republic-level propaganda departments rely on the functional departments of the republic Central Committee to approve specialized media material. The Latvian

propaganda department, for example, monitors all Latvian publications and transmits instructions to the press, but the other Latvian Central Committee departments have the right to veto articles on subjects within their area of specialization. The Russian-language Komsomol newspaper in Latvia normally consults the republic-level Central Committee department for youth and students rather than the propaganda department and solicits publication clearances (visas) from other Central Committee departments as well. In the Ukraine, the Kiev Party daily similarly relies on different Central Committee departments, not just the propaganda department, to approve articles for publication. On controversial articles involving a ministry's domain, the chief editor first obtains the ministry's approval and then turns to the corresponding Central Committee department.

In Lithuania, we were told, the propaganda department assertively controls all publications in any field. It follows the republican press closely, and in cases of editorial venturesomeness, particularly in dealing with indigenous social and economic problems, reacts swiftly, preempting intervention by Moscow authorities. The department reportedly has its own science section and an international affairs section. Editors of international affairs broadcasts regularly contact the international affairs section. It, in turn, stays in direct touch with Moscow for the latest instructions. A paradoxical consequence of this assertive local control in Lithuania is that in recent times the sympathetic orientation of the republic's late First Secretary Sniechkus and his entourage permitted Lithuanian cultural media greater leeway in treating positively themes relating to Lithuanian nationhood than was possible in neighboring Latvia, which is more closely controlled by Moscow.

In Tadzhikistan, the activity of the republican propaganda department appears to focus on media personnel matters. As illustrations of the department's involvement in media content, respondents mentioned direct telephone lines used by editorial offices to consult with the department regarding publication or rejection of articles and the department's participation in preparing publication plans for special holiday issues and for issues commemorating a political event or celebrating literature and art.

In the provinces, as in cities and districts, the local Party Committee secretaries appear to play a greater role in deciding the topics to be covered by the local newspapers than is the case in the central, all-Union press in Moscow, where the chief editors appear to have more day-to-day authority, subject to overall guidelines. Department editors of the city paper *Moskovskaia pravda*, for example, formulating three-month publication plans, consult the different *gorkom* departments in their topic area to learn what the departments want handled in the press. When these editors want approval for a controversial article, they contact the *gorkom* secretary in charge of the subject area.

There is a strict hierarchy among media, and the local press is not permitted to criticize the central press. The most a local Moscow paper can do is maintain silence when *Pravda* praises something or, conversely, decries something occurring in Moscow. When the central press criticizes the local press, however, the latter must respond with self-criticism.

In brief, our respondents told us that the strict control maintained by the center over the regional press does not leave the latter much room to take independent positions or to speak for local interests. The best reporters work in Moscow; much of the material carried by the local media is received "canned" from the capital and

cannot be altered; local authorities take more of a direct hand in media affairs than is the case in Moscow. Our respondents spoke disparagingly of the local press as being dull and poor. But there are exceptions. Those who worked in Latvian and Lithuanian media stated that journalists were less constrained in the Baltic republics than in Russia. For example, the Komsomol paper in Riga was the first Soviet paper to discuss UFOs.

How should we react, then, to reports that the regional press sometimes carries official materials, such as leaders' speeches, in slightly different form from the Moscow media?<sup>32</sup> Our respondents offered two views: Some said that if there is a mystery there, it is in the offices of TASS, not in the local regions, for by the time an item like a leader's speech is received by a local newspaper over the TASS wire, it has "must" status (it is called *obiazatel'nye* material) and cannot be altered in any way. But one regional editor said that speeches of some leaders other than Brezhnev can be shortened to save space and that translation into non-Russian languages, which is done quickly at the republican level, can result in errors.

## THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRIES AND STATE COMMITTEES

Much of what one reads in the daily Soviet press (and a fortiori in the specialized press and journals) consists of articles written by specialists on fairly narrow topics concerned with industry, agriculture, public health, transportation, etc. In this kind of coverage the media are exhorted to be hard-hitting, and so they frequently are, at least about local matters and specific problems. The result is a degree of critical journalistic populism. But how do ministries and state committees react when the media expose their shortcomings? After all, their responsibilities give them authority, which they exercise and protect. They have their story to tell; they don't want to look bad in print; and they may wish to attack their bureaucratic competitors. The ministries have a stake in supervising what appears about them in the media. The result, according to our respondents, is a complex system of coordination, involving the Party authorities just discussed, the ministries, and the media.

### Prepublication Review: Visas

The general procedure in dealing with technical material proposed for publication is that the media must obtain a "visa" from the ministry in whose province the material falls, i.e., an official sign-off to the effect that someone in the ministry has read the proposed item and finds nothing objectionable in it. Glavlit requires the visa before it grants final publication clearance. The visa procedure recognizes both ministerial expertise and authority.

The present system differs fundamentally, at least in form, from that which prevailed until the 1950s. Then, KGB-run "first departments" in industrial plants and associated institutes, together with Glavlit, monopolized the clearance of indus-

<sup>32</sup> An illustrative occasion where this happened is the All-Union Kolkhoz Congress in late November 1969. Many regional speakers at the Congress praised Brezhnev highly. The texts of their speeches carried in the local papers showed this. But the central press consistently eliminated these references from its versions of the speeches. In some cases, the central press also deleted speakers' statements on substantive issues regarding the *kolkhoz* charter.

trial information for the press. Today, that function is performed by ministry press departments.

Consulted to ensure that no sensitive or secret information appears in published material, ministries also have the discretion to veto material they find objectionable. For instance, the Health Ministry reportedly once refused to give the required visa for a *Pravda* article praising the advanced work of a surgeon in Estonia, which the writer had prepared to show obliquely that Moscow's more favored medical community lagged in some cases behind the provinces. The ministry vetoed the article on the grounds that the Estonian surgeon had been expelled from the Party, although our respondent suspected that the real reason was that the sensitivities of the Moscow-centered medical establishment were stung. In other cases, respondents noted, the ministry rejected articles that would have reflected negatively on the leadership of the Health Minister, B. V. Petrovskii.<sup>33</sup> Ministry self-interest as well as security considerations underlie the visa system. A former editor reported:

If you do an interview with an employee of the ministry or if you just want to talk about the work of the ministry, you have to get visas for the material from the ministry. In every ministry nowadays there has been created a Department of Information which is concerned with fulfilling the censorship regulations. You have to go through this department. Or you may have to get the permission of some division chief in the ministry. As a rule, this would be the chief of the main administration or his deputy. If the article contains technical data, then you must also get an "act of technical expertise." It is simply something in writing that says that this particular technical process already has a patent and that you won't be giving anything away. All of this is required by Glavlit, whether the article comes from a newspaper editorial office or from a journal. There is a general rule to stay within certain parameters, but each minister decides exactly how he wants to fulfill those rules.

Ministry information bureaus are like a filter. They protect the ministry from possible criticism in the newspapers, from various critical observations that would not be helpful to the ministry. From that point of view they are a barrier. They also protect material that is considered secret from publication. They are instructed by Glavlit on what is possible to publish and what is forbidden.

In the unusual event that the Central Committee wants a ministry criticized in the press, the critical article needs no visa from the ministry involved. The Central Committee department concerned calls the Propaganda Department, which then orders the chief editor of the appropriate paper to print the story; Glavlit is so informed. One interviewee said that such a situation might arise when a ministry fails to fulfill its annual plan. The Industrial Department would call the Propaganda Department and request that several articles critical of the particular minister be arranged, because "we in the Central Committee are considering whether to remove that minister." In the city and district-level media, *gorkom* and *raikom* staffs rather than ministry subordinates regularly decide which economic activities and problems receive coverage.

<sup>33</sup> Elected to candidate membership in the CPSU Central Committee at the Party's 24th Congress in April 1966, Petrovskii was dropped from the Central Committee at the 26th Congress, in March 1981. Petrovskii was evidently not a popular figure among Soviet journalists; he was the subject of many negative stories in our interviews. Several respondents reported problems in obtaining Health Ministry visas for their articles, and the impression we got was that Petrovskii's ministry was touchier than most.

## Lobbying in the Media

Besides clearing copy submitted to them, ministries and state committees generate media material themselves, thus, in effect, "lobbying" for their interests in mass as well as specialized media. A former ministry publicist told us:

Today, all central ministries have their own "agitational" apparatus. All ministries have the so-called "Presstsentry" staffed with qualified journalists, who are busily promoting throughout the entire system topics that are of interest to their particular ministry.

In the mid-1960s, several ministries established press centers. They hired professional journalists and filmmakers and formed full-time staffs, typically including ten to fifteen professionals, whose job is to generate favorable media coverage of the ministry's activities. Several respondents who worked in ministry press centers reported that they were not involved in clearing outside press copy, but concentrated on preparing and distributing materials themselves. They produced trade journals, in-house publications, articles for the central papers, and films for central television and educational institutions.

Whenever possible, press centers hire journalists who have good connections with editors and can facilitate favorable media coverage of the ministry's activities. This is believed to improve the ministry's prospects for getting support for advantageous plan assignments. The press centers produce "politically correct" copy, and therefore their editor friends have no worries about placing it in their paper. In addition, there is some overlap of personnel: One of our respondents was simultaneously a press center journalist and a correspondent for *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, and he easily placed articles about his ministry in the paper. In addition to its press center, one ministry hired three former journalists specifically for the purpose of publicizing how well the ministry was doing its job. These men sat in on meetings of the ministry's collegium. In this case, the press center staff monitored newspaper coverage of the ministry's activities and lodged complaints with newspapers when they presented erroneous information (even though they knew that Soviet papers, as a rule, do not issue retractions). This press center also sought to have *Pravda* check its reporters' stories with the center in advance to ensure technical accuracy, but it did not succeed.

## Editing Ministry Copy

In order to appraise the role of the ministries in the media, one would need to know specific details such as the numbers of people working in press centers and the thoroughness of their coverage. Moreover, the press centers are not the only means by which the ministries convey their point of view to the press. Perhaps as many as half of the articles that appear on pages 2 and 3 of a Soviet newspaper (i.e., the main domestic sections) carry the bylines of officials who are identified with one or another specialized ministry or state committee. These articles are usually solicited by the newspaper, but one can only assume that they have been cleared by the ministries and do not depart from their institutional viewpoint. Nevertheless, the procedure may not be nearly as streamlined as the above might imply. Several of our ex-journalist respondents told us that one of their most common and time-consuming chores was to rewrite the copy submitted by such specialized contributors—mainly,

they said, because the prose was so bad; but presumably, as they rewrote they applied a certain amount of editorial revision. Thus, the exact wording of such articles may come from many different places, regardless of the byline.

### **The USSR Foreign Ministry**

The Foreign Ministry, according to several respondents, exerts an unusually high degree of influence in the media. Even before Foreign Minister Gromyko's appointment to the Politburo in 1973, major articles and books on foreign affairs reportedly required the Ministry's clearance or visa. In particular, the Ministry cleared all articles appearing in *International Affairs* (*Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*). The Ministry's press bureau, which respondents termed "very conservative," reads foreign affairs articles, and Ministry departments clear book manuscripts in their specialties. Even TASS and Novosti (APN) have reportedly faced increasing Foreign Ministry control in their international news coverage since 1967. The Foreign Ministry checks articles on diplomatic affairs in the international affairs journals *Za rubezhom* and *New Times* (*Novoe vremia*), but the Central Committee International Department is responsible for reviewing articles dealing with the international Communist movement.

Several of our respondents asserted that in cases of disputes over approval of an article or book, the Foreign Ministry's authority is higher than that of the International Department. Others qualified this, pointing out that when relations with Communist Parties are involved, the views of Secretary Ponomarev and his International Department prevail. Sometimes the Foreign Ministry declines to take responsibility for clearing a major article, and the article is sent to the Central Committee offices.

### **USSR Committee for State Security (KGB)**

During the Stalin era, the security police pervaded the media. In the 1930s, the OGPU (predecessor of the KGB) was responsible for the surveillance and supervision of writers and Glavlit and Agitprop officials. Glavlit staff were paid by the OGPU and wore its uniform.<sup>34</sup> Today, the KGB continues to have surveillance, security, and censorship responsibilities, but the scope of its direct involvement has been reduced. In the Novosti news agency, which has offices around the world, KGB personnel with journalist covers handle security and intelligence gathering. Heads of Novosti personnel administration and the international relations department have been KGB officers. In Novosti central editorial offices, foreign intelligence officers and propaganda specialists from the KGB prepare materials and instructions for APN editorial offices dealing with foreign news agencies. One respondent claimed that a KGB "propaganda administration" plants articles in the domestic press, and that a KGB worker was the author of an anti-Israeli novel, *Zemlia obetovannaia* (*The Promised Land*), which was published in the literary journal *Oktiabr'* in September-October 1972. The KGB controls news dissemination on the cases it brings to court, providing information only to *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, TASS, and Novosti. The news agencies then prepare the copy and make it available to the rest of the Soviet press.

<sup>34</sup> Fainsod, pp. 155-156, 368, 373, and 376; Dewhirst and Farrell, pp. 11, 72.

KGB surveillance remains strong in the Writers' Union. Here, as well as in the Journalists' and Artists' Unions, KGB representatives are placed in top administrative positions. Editors of newspaper letters departments regularly forward readers' letters deemed to contain anti-Soviet views to the KGB. Officials from the KGB's cultural office sometimes clear literary works. In Moscow and Leningrad, we were told, they also check stage productions. In industrial research institutes, a KGB "special department" (*spetsotdel*), formally subordinated to a deputy minister of the industry, verifies that manuscripts prepared by the staff do not contain patentable or classified data.<sup>35</sup>

The KGB works with Glavlit in compiling the censor's *Index* of nonpublishable information. It handles security clearances for Glavlit personnel, and Glavlit draws on former KGB employees for part of its enormous censors pool. A special censorship office exists at the KGB for prepublication review of all material dealing with KGB activities.

Our respondents were quick to identify this or that person in the Soviet media establishment as a KGB member, yet they did not give us the impression that such KGB presence has a particularly strong influence on the management of the media. In a sense, the KGB acts as a service organization; the key relationship that determines the tone and content of media coverage is that of the Central Committee Propaganda Department with the media editors.

### USSR Ministry of Defense

The mastheads of many military newspapers and journals show the Ministry of Defense or one of the armed services as the publisher. As noted earlier, official Soviet sources acknowledge that the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces (MPA) controls the content of the entire military press. The top Party organ in the military, the MPA has the status of a Central Committee department, reporting both to the Central Committee and to the Defense Minister, who since 1973 has been a Politburo member.

Those of our respondents who were knowledgeable about the military media had worked primarily in the regional military press of the USSR. They regarded the military press as very tightly and effectively controlled. Even military district newspapers, which are not sold to the public, contain only minimally more information than the open military press.

Although MPA representatives are military men, they adhere to Party policy and discipline. No respondents reported encountering assertiveness in the media process on the part of the professional military proper. Polish respondents, who followed the Soviet military press and had contacts with its representatives, did distinguish between political-military media, such as *Krasnaia zvezda*, and professional military media. In the latter category, they regularly read the journals *Voen-*

<sup>35</sup> One respondent spoke derisively of the low level of competence he encountered in the *spetsotdel*. Unable to evaluate the technical material, its "bureaucrat" merely asked the author to sign a form stating that the manuscript contained no classified information. However, the respondent also stated that the manuscript had already been evaluated by the institute's "publications commission." Made up of 5 or 6 persons, the commission included the *spetsotdel* chief, the deputy director of the institute, a union representative, and several engineers. The commission would forward certification to Glavlit that the manuscripts it reviewed contained no classified information.



*naia mysl'* (limited distribution), *Voennyi vestnik*, and *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, which, they said, occasionally contained genuine discussions of military issues.

All material referring to the military, whether published in the military or the regular press, has to pass through military censors. Officially, the military censors are affiliated with the General Staff, but, as discussed below, former military journalists we interviewed believe their guidance issued from the MPA and a KGB military department. Political control of military media is further ensured by the requirement that all copy must pass final Glavlit censorship as well.

However, chief editors of all military publications come from within the military. The chief editors of military district papers hold the rank of colonel. The staff members of military media do not rotate to other military duties but pursue careers at a single media organ. It is not unusual for a chief editor to work up to his position through the ranks of his newspaper or journal. Since the chief of MPA controls the *nomenklatura* system and military rank awards for political workers within the military,<sup>36</sup> he presumably also determines editorial appointments.

Since late 1980 (after the departure of our respondents from the USSR), Soviet General Staff spokesmen, expressly identified as such, have started appearing in the media to comment on the military situation in Europe and on Soviet proposals for arms control and related measures. This practice began with interviews granted to Novosti and published in neutral country and East European press and has expanded to appearances of General Staff officers on Soviet television and in press conferences before West European newsmen. While we cannot determine whether this phenomenon is a novel aspect of the media strategy implemented by the new International Information Department of the Central Committee or a sign of General Staff assertiveness in the area of its particular competence, it has significantly enlarged the media presence of General Staff spokesmen.<sup>37</sup>

### State Committees Supervising Media

Three state agencies operate, in effect, as extensions of the Central Committee Propaganda Department and administer the day-to-day affairs of the printing trade and the broadcasting and film media. These are the State Committee for Publishing Houses, Printing Plants, and the Book Trade, known also as the USSR Goskomizdat (B. I. Stukalin, chairman); the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting (S. G. Lapin, chairman); and the State Committee for Cinematography (F. T. Ermash, chairman). Stukalin and Lapin are full members of the Central Committee, Ermash a candidate member. Committee responsibilities include supervising the content of the media under their control. Production and programming plans are approved by officials of the committees, who follow Central Committee instructions passed on by the Propaganda Department or received by the committee chairmen directly. The State Committee for Publishing has extensive authority in approving books but is involved only in administering technical aspects of journals and newspa-

<sup>36</sup> *Sovetskaia Voennaia Entsiklopediia*, Vol. 2, 1976, p. 564.

<sup>37</sup> See first deputy chief of the General Staff Gen. Akhromeyev's interview in the Vienna daily *Die Presse*, December 10, 1980; Lt. Gen. N. Chervov in *Rude Pravo*, July 18, 1981; Maj. Gen. V. Starodubov's talk on Soviet television, reported by TASS, August 24, 1981; J. Riedmueller's report on a Moscow news conference in *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, October 30, 1981, and *The New York Times*, January 26, 1982.

pers.<sup>38</sup> The State Committee for Television and Radio, in addition to preparing programming plans, monitors all broadcasts, signing off on final scripts alongside Glavlit. Since the 1960s, all television programs except news broadcasts have been videotaped rather than broadcast live. Several respondents emphasized the direct involvement of committee chairman Lapin, appointed in 1970, in defining radio and television program content and personnel policies. In the provinces, local party committees approve programming plans of the broadcast media in their area. Respondents reported that occasional programs dealing candidly with local social problems were more likely to be permitted in the provinces than in the central cities.

## GLAVLIT AND SPECIALIZED CENSORSHIP

All material appearing in Soviet media has passed final screening by the censors. The censorship system ensures that editors and authors adhere to the regulations and guidelines imposed on the media, but according to our respondents, the censors play a relatively minor role as an instrument of political control, compared to the chief editors and their staffs (and compared to the Polish censorship office).

Moreover, self-censorship steers the professional Soviet writer away from censorable topics. Former Soviet journalists emphasized that not only editors, but also authors themselves see to it that their copy does not violate the written and unwritten rules of Soviet open communications. It is primarily self-censorship that keeps serious controversy out of Soviet media. Rooted in the Stalinist legacy of terror and fear of losing one's life for expressing the wrong thought, self-censorship today is sustained primarily by fear of jeopardizing a good career. A journalist, either staff or free-lance, wants his stories printed, not rejected; he wants to be in demand, to increase his earnings. He wants to do the job right and advance up the ladder, possibly to a major Party paper or a Moscow paper, so that he can become eligible for scarce material benefits. Our respondents were quick to cite access to restricted stores and better apartments as compelling incentives for journalists.

### Glavlit

Officially attached to the USSR Council of Ministers, Glavlit (the Main Administration for Safeguarding State Secrets in the Press) maintains a countrywide network of censors, estimated to number at least 70,000.<sup>39</sup> Located at printing plants, editorial offices, and broadcasting studios, Glavlit censors scrutinize all media material before giving it the final stamp of approval for public release.<sup>40</sup> Preventing the unauthorized use of printing equipment is also their duty, enforced so exactly that not even wedding announcements can be printed without first receiving the censor's stamp.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Walker, pp. 29-37, describes in detail the organization and activities of the USSR Goskomizdat.

<sup>39</sup> Dewhirst and Farrell, p. 65. L. Finkelstein offers this as a very conservative estimate, based on the number of towns in the USSR.

<sup>40</sup> The censor's code number appears on the printing data page of all Soviet publications, except the volumes of Brezhnev's and other top leaders' collected speeches and writings, official publications of Party and government directives and legislation, and publications in foreign languages.

<sup>41</sup> A CPSU Central Committee instruction, dated February 11, 1959, made Glavlit responsible for notifying Party organizations if ministries, scientific organizations, or other agencies issue unauthorized free-distribution printed matter (*KPSS o sredstvakh massovoi informatsii i propagandy*, p. 442).

Dismissing as mere formality Glavlit's subordination to the Council of Ministers, our respondents stated emphatically that in practice the Central Committee Propaganda Department and the KGB supervise Glavlit. The Propaganda Department provides its ideological and political guidelines. Glavlit's head since 1957, Pavel Romanov, worked previously on press affairs as a Central Committee staff member. The KGB defines classified information and handles Glavlit's administrative and staffing matters. Many censors are former KGB employees.

The KGB and Glavlit jointly prepare the censor's *Index (Perechen')*, a classified handbook on "state secrets" which may not be disclosed in the media. The *Index* also incorporates Defense Ministry instructions. Various described as 300 to 1,000 pages thick, the volume is updated regularly and lists military, technical, statistical, and other data, such as names of persons, not to be mentioned in the media.<sup>42</sup> Its standards of what is considered sensitive from the standpoint of military and state security are extreme. A respondent told us how the censor once rejected an article on the draining of a Lithuanian swamp as "revealing geographic and topographic subtleties which might be useful to an invading military."<sup>43</sup> Every censor has a copy of the *Index* in his safe, as do chief editors (in contrast to Poland, where chief editors were not allowed to have the *Index*). The censor is ultimately responsible for enforcing the *Index's* myriad prohibitions and ensures against editorial oversight or journalistic zeal. For example, an inexperienced *Moskovskaia pravda* reporter's article on a new gold deposit in Uzbekistan was stopped by the censor. Surprising as it may seem, the editors had not recalled that such topics are considered secret.

Our respondents described Glavlit's mission as primarily a technical one.<sup>44</sup> Since the early 1960s, primary responsibility for political content has belonged to the editors, not the censors. The censor may raise questions, but his authority in political matters is not automatic, except in cases of indexed information. If a censor disagrees strongly with an editor, he can call his superior, who may consult Party or state bodies and then persuade the editor to withhold the material or agree to let it pass.<sup>45</sup> Usually in such cases, editors and censors work out a compromise. Chief editors of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, who are Central Committee members, have the right of "second signature," whereby they can sign off alongside the censor and print material on their own responsibility if they choose to disregard the censor's objections.<sup>46</sup> At

<sup>42</sup> Relatively detailed information on the contents of the *Index* appears in Dewhirst and Farrell, pp. 55-56; Leonid Vladimirov, "Glavlit: How the Soviet Censor Works," *Index on Censorship*, Vol. I, No. 3/4, Autumn/Winter 1972, pp. 38-39; and Boris Gorokhoff, *Publishing in the USSR*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1959, pp. 83, 258-260.

<sup>43</sup> It is easy to place information on Glavlit's proscribed list but nearly impossible to remove it:

If somebody wants to lift the secrecy and make some hitherto forbidden material public domain, that would take a long time. To do this one should approach the Central Committee. For the Central Committee, it is an unusual matter, and the Central Committee would be reluctant to allow it immediately. There would be haggling and questions asked. That is why such occurrences are rather rare in the Soviet Union, because who would be interested in going to the Central Committee?

<sup>44</sup> For émigré journalist comments on the censor's role as a "secondary" and "purely technical one," see "A Conversation with Viktor Perel'man," *Radio Liberty Research*, July 9, 1973, p. 10; Nikolai Gavrilov, "Letter from a Soviet Writer," *The New Leader*, December 9, 1963, p. 16; and Antony Buzek, *How the Communist Press Works*, London, Praeger, 1964, pp. 140ff, 195.

<sup>45</sup> A former staff editor of the popular science journal *Znanie-sila* states that Glavlit sent a report to the Central Committee Propaganda Department complaining that the journal was publishing science fiction stories containing political allusions. The Department called in the deputy chief editor and gave him a reprimand (Dewhirst and Farrell, p. 53).

<sup>46</sup> At *Pravda*, censors' enforcement of *Index* regulations is very lax, and the paper contains a lot of "errors" in this respect (Dewhirst and Farrell, p. 67). But the chief editor reviews thoroughly all material with ideological content.

TASS, senior officials can override the instructions of the censor's *Index*, presumably with the concurrence of higher authorities, since TASS censors stay in contact with the Propaganda Department (and presumably with the International Information Department as well). The same "override" mechanism is presumably at work when senior Soviet officials reveal under their bylines information that would normally be considered secret, as for example when in the spring of 1980 Gosplan's department chief for oil and gas released figures on the flow rates for new oil wells in West Siberia.<sup>47</sup> In a system with basically arbitrary rules, personal prerogative appears to count for a great deal. On politically sensitive matters, editors breaking with precedent and supported by authorities may anticipate forthcoming revisions in Glavlit's instructions. In 1965, Glavlit readily reversed its refusal, based on its current instructions, to allow Stalin's photo in a publication, after the editor cleared the matter with the Central Committee Secretary in charge of propaganda.

During the Stalin era, Glavlit had formidable enforcement authority, reflecting the power of the secret police with which it was openly associated. The chief of Glavlit was also the official in charge of military censorship. The cases of editors who failed to follow censors' directives were referred to the OGPU for further action.<sup>48</sup>

Today, the Glavlit censor may report a presumptuous editor to the Central Committee offices, but the editor's fate depends on his political connections and his protectors' willingness to support him. The censor has the more vulnerable position when a controversy over published material turns out badly for the newspaper. In such cases, our respondents noted, the censor assigned to the publication may well be fired for failure to take adequate steps to prevent the occurrence, even if he had voiced initial misgivings.

Deterred essentially by self-interest in protecting their careers, editors and writers seldom risk outright violation of the censor's rules. The penalties for doing so can be dismissal and exclusion from the profession. But those determined to slip controversial material past the censors have occasionally found ways to do so. The limits of censors' authority and lapses in censorial thoroughness provide opportunities for a limited amount of evasion to those willing to risk the consequences. The censorship system has dealt with challenges to its competence by improving its personnel and organization. In the 1960s, university graduates replaced the older Glavlit cadre. Specialized censorship offices have assumed the main responsibility for approving material in key scientific and technical areas.

About 100 censors operate out of the Glavlit headquarters in Moscow. More than half of them are "chief censors," and there is also a more senior group, which exercises what is called "supercontrol." Branch offices, known as *Obllit* in provinces and *Gorlit* in cities, extend Glavlit's control to media in outlying regions. Respondents maintained that central Glavlit controls the local offices, but they could not offer specifics.<sup>49</sup> *Obkom* propaganda departments and the local KGB branch also supervise these offices. The Leningrad *obkom* has frequently overturned *Gorlit* censors' decisions on literature and stage productions. A *Gorlit* office operates also in

<sup>47</sup> V. I. Filanovskii, "Zapadno-sibirskii neftegazovyi kompleks: rezul'taty i perspektivy," *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, 3-1980, pp. 19-26.

<sup>48</sup> Fainsod, p. 373.

<sup>49</sup> The provinces or *oblasts* also have the dual structure of censors and "supercontrol," or *vtoraia ruka* (the second hand): "Something which is approved on the first censor level may be rejected on the second level." However, at the district or *raion* level, there is usually only one censor.

Moscow, censoring the Moscow *gorkom* papers *Moskovskaia pravda* and *Vecherniaia Moskva*, other local papers, and also *Literaturnaia gazeta* and *Novyi mir*, according to respondents. Regional censors are less sophisticated but stricter than Glavlit censors.

### Specialized Censorship Agencies

Glavlit depends on specialized censorship agencies to censor material dealing with the military and with advanced science related to national defense, but it retains the right of final approval. Usually, editorial staffs obtain approvals from ministries and specialized censorship agencies on their own initiative and submit them to the Glavlit censor with the copy. The lines of authority are not always clearly drawn on the question of which specialized agency may issue approval in a particular case. It is at this juncture that material has sometimes been approved for publication by someone who later turns out to lack the proper authority.

Military censors review all media material referring to any aspect of military affairs, past or present. In Moscow, editors take their copy to the Military Censorship (*Voennaia tsenzura*) of the General Staff, located in the General Staff building. They pick up the material, bearing the stamp of the military censor, several days later at another address. The censors are military officers. We know of no cases of Glavlit questioning their decisions. The system apparently runs smoothly because everyone concerned is so familiar with it.

Special censors, located at the USSR Academy of Sciences, review material in key science and technology areas related to national defense. All publications and broadcasts referring to space activities require prior authorization from an office of the Commission for Research and Exploitation of Cosmic Space, attached to the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The "space censor" was established in 1957. Specialized censorship offices also exist for radio electronics, chemistry, geology, and computer science.

The atomic censorship office, housed in a building of the State Committee for Utilization of Atomic Energy in Moscow, reviews all material (including science fiction stories) which refers to uses of nuclear energy, be they peaceful or military.

The KGB functions as a specialized censorship agency for any material that deals with KGB activities. Its approval is obtained by Glavlit. But one magazine editor took stories on KGB and militia themes to a literary group officer at the Lubianka for clearance. This officer also approved the publication of an aerial view of Moscow. In other respondents' experience, aerial photos required military censors' approval, and articles or fictional stories about the police had to be approved also by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD).

### CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this section we asked to what extent the control mechanisms applied to the media succeed in holding the journalists' latitude within the bounds desired by the leadership and whether the agencies that oversee the media fulfill the basic criteria of effective overseers. Coordinating the several roles the media are supposed to serve—transmitter of official directives, exhorter and mobilizer and

educator, gadfly of local bureaucrats, and even purveyor of a little news—makes the task of management and political controls a complicated one, and this, one might suppose, would give the journalist some latitude.

Our reconstruction of the control mechanisms applied by the Party apparatus to the media suggests that these mechanisms are more direct, strict, and pervasive—and hence a closer approximation of the totalitarian model—than the control apparatus in many other areas of Soviet life.

The control mechanism does fulfill the basic requirements for successful oversight: Those who supervise the press are unlikely to be overly swayed by the journalists' rather vague concern with producing "interesting" copy (except in unusual cases such as that of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, discussed in Appendix D). While the career lines of overseers and those they supervise may overlap, there is no particular sign that this creates any problems of conflicting loyalties; indeed, the only evidence we can find of divided loyalties was that which existed among certain chief editors during the height of journalistic liberalism under Khrushchev. The potential for "co-optation" of the controllers by the controlled is lessened by the fact that they do not really have a vital common stake in the media's public appeal. Neither depends critically on whether the newspaper or journal sells or not, or on whether any given radio or television show has an audience.

Therefore, if experts in specialized technical fields, say, military administration, industrial management, or scientific research, have achieved a greater degree of latitude in the USSR in recent years, the same cannot be said about Soviet journalists. Soviet journalism cannot be considered a "technical" field in the same sense as engineering; nor is it considered "scientific" to the degree that its professional norms are respected.

Of course, the volume of material appearing daily in the Soviet media is so large that even hundreds of overseers could not review every word directly. None of our respondents claimed that the linchpin of the media control system, the Central Committee Propaganda Department, attempts to do that. Rather, the procedures the Department uses (much like those developed by other central-clearance organizations that face the problem of reviewing unmanageably large flows of material with limited staff) involve prioritization, delegation, consultation, and deterrence. Prioritization is simply the selection of the most important issues for detailed attention (foreign affairs, for example, appears to get much more attention than most domestic issues). Delegation is the systematic reliance on editors-in-chief as the principal enforcers of the Central Committee's guidelines, and on Glavlit as a technical enforcement agency. Consultation is the widespread use of other departments and ministries for advice, which has the added advantage of spreading responsibility in case of error. Finally, deterrence is achieved by dealing harshly with journalists and contributors who cross the line, making enough of a public spectacle of them to cow the rest and ensure continued self-censorship and self-restraint. This system provides for thorough review in the Central Committee apparatus of any *major* departure in media tone or coverage, which reflects deliberate decisions taken at high levels.

The Soviet media *do* differ from one another, not only in general liveliness and readability, but also such attributes as degree of liberalism or conservatism. How can that be explained? Is it deliberate policy on the part of the Central Committee, intended to reach effectively different audiences? Is it a reflection of the influence of

different departments of the Central Committee over different media? A sign of the different interests and views of the different ministries and organizations who are the "official" publishers of various media organs? Or of the different constituencies and readerships that each is trying to reach? We conclude that, especially in the Brezhnev period, the different "images" of individual media are primarily the consequence of a carefully controlled policy to reach specific audiences. However, as we have seen and as we shall discuss further below, such diversity, though initiated from above, may take on some additional life of its own, creating complications for the political controllers and the possibility of disagreements among them. Whether or not this happens usually depends on the power and personality of the chief editor.

### III. THE ROLES OF THE CHIEF EDITOR AND THE EDITORIAL PROCESS IN THE SOVIET MEDIA

#### INTRODUCTION

"Give me a copy of any Soviet newspaper," said a long-time reporter for *Moskovskaia pravda*, "and I can tell you the personality of the chief editor. So can any other Soviet newspaperman. By the content you can always tell whether the chief editor is a coward or not."

Whether that statement is literally true or not, there was no doubt in our respondents' minds that the editor-in-chief of a Soviet newspaper is by far the most important person on the staff and that he puts the stamp of his personality on the entire editorial process. Respondents tended to divide their recollections into "eras," corresponding to the chief editors they worked under. They often said, "Under X the newspaper got better; under Y it got worse."

What do they actually mean by that? How important is it for the Western analyst to know who the editor-in-chief of a particular newspaper may be? Is the appointment of a certain kind of chief editor a matter of accident, personal connections, bureaucratic rules of promotion, or significant shifts in upper-level policy? Does the identity of the chief editor actually make a difference in the frankness, daring, or degree of initiative displayed by the staff, with major consequences for the content of the paper itself? Or do the tone and style of a Soviet newspaper depend much more on the level and type of organization that oversees it and the kind of institution it speaks for, or on the overall policy being applied by the top leadership?

To gain some insight into these questions, we asked our respondents for their recollections of the editors-in-chief they had worked under or knew about, and for their impressions of the roles their chief editors had played and how these roles affected the editorial process. The respondents gave us a strikingly diverse picture. There is no such thing, apparently, as the archetypal editor-in-chief. Nevertheless, we could discern, through the variety of personalities described to us, certain regularities in career patterns, functions, and relations with higher authority. Together these give us some preliminary answers to the questions raised above.

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE CHIEF EDITOR

The chief editor of a Soviet newspaper is the captain of his ship. He has the final word on what appears in print; he has the power to hire and fire; and through his control of resources like discretionary funds, travel passes, and free-lance assignments, he can reward or punish. Depending on his personality and style, he may be easygoing or strict, tolerant of criticism and familiarity or remote and autocratic, but he is unquestionably the one who rules the newspaper. However, his power exists for a specific purpose, to carry out the line set by the Central Committee Propaganda Department, and it lasts only as long as he has the Department's confidence. A Soviet newspaper is in no sense the chief editor's fief. Compared to Soviet ministers, for



example, many of whom have held their jobs for ten or twenty years, the chief editors of the major Soviet dailies are moved about at shorter intervals. Unlike the output of his industrial colleagues, the chief editor's product gives him little bargaining power with the political authorities. Consequently, he is in practice the representative of the Propaganda Department within the editorial office.

Many of our respondents saw the chief editor as a remote figure, partly for a simple reason: A chief editor, they said, spends much of his working day at the Central Committee, often appearing at the newspaper only in the evening to check the next day's issue before it goes to press. Moreover, the chief editor's job requires a number of additional memberships and responsibilities, many of them ceremonial, such as participation in peace committees and international friendship societies, but others involving more powerful affiliations, such as seats on Party committees. The more prestigious the newspaper or journal, the more such additional hats the chief editor wears. Thus the editor of *Izvestiia*, P. F. Alekseev (about whom we shall say more below), is simultaneously a deputy chairman of the USSR Union of Journalists and a member of its Secretariat; more important, he is a full member of the USSR Central Committee. V. G. Afanas'ev, the chief editor of *Pravda*, is likewise a member of the Central Committee and is also the chairman of the Union of Journalists. Lesser figures, such as Lev Spiridonov of *Moskovskaia pravda* (the organ of the Moscow City Committee of the Party), are members of the Moscow *gorkom* or of the executive committee of the Moscow City Soviet. In other words, chief editors are prominent figures in the political elite of the level they happen to belong to, and as such they have no lack of opportunity to follow the evolution of the official line on the important issues of the day, and to adjust their media coverage accordingly. (As we shall see below, the chief editor also has additional ways of staying in touch with what is expected of him.)

So widespread is the phenomenon of multiple hats that one wonders whether the chief editor really has the time to maintain the tight grip that the Central Committee desires. Is there someone else on the editorial staff who is the Propaganda Department's "real man"? For all but the most important papers, the answer appears to be no. On the contrary, we were told that on most newspapers a newly appointed chief editor builds his own team of subordinates, typically outsiders whom he brings from his previous job or individuals whom he raids from neighboring newspapers. On the most important papers, however, the first deputy chief editor may be the one who provides the undivided oversight that the chief editor does not have the time for. One is struck by the fact that Krivitskii of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Skliarov of *Pravda*, and Novikov of *Sovetskaia Rossiia* had all served for several years in the Central Committee Propaganda Department before moving into their positions as first deputy chief editors. Similarly, Kosolapov (now chief editor of *Kommunist*) and Kharlamov (now chief editor of *Sel'skaia zhizn'*) had likewise served for several years in the Propaganda Department before assuming positions as first deputy chief editor at *Pravda* and *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, respectively. Despite this seemingly strong pattern, however, none of our respondents singled out the position of first deputy chief editor as one of special political significance, so the point remains unsettled.

The chief editor is far more important than the official censor; indeed, in many ways he is the newspaper's real censor. As indicated in Section II, the responsibility of the official censor, though important, is confined to the specific task of deleting

whatever appears on his list of forbidden details. The censor does not make political judgments. That is the job of the chief editor.

As for the editor-in-chief's overall impact, success in Soviet journalism is primarily defined by the ability of a newspaper's staff to balance the multiple demands of the political authorities above and around them. First, because of their functions, chief editors are not so much journalists as professional administrator-politicians. Consequently, they are judged least of all by their talents as writers or newshounds. It is common to hear a former Soviet newsman describe his boss by saying, "He couldn't write, of course. But he was an excellent judge of people, and he knew exactly what would get through and what would not." And while most editors-in-chief started out as journalists, that is not invariably the case. They are people who are valued primarily for their talents as executives and transmitters of official policy.

The description in Section II of the mechanisms for control of the media make it clear why the proper functioning of the system depends so strongly on the chief editor operating as the Propaganda Department's extension. Direct control of every detail would be impossible. As the Central Committee's viceroy, the chief editor is responsible for translating the overall guidelines of the Central Committee into specific decisions. He has the job of patrolling the boundary line in each day's issue between the official and the unofficial, the permitted and the forbidden, and the newspaper staff and the political authorities. And he must somehow reconcile the several objectives of the Central Committee in media affairs: to be interesting and provocative while at the same time being safe and offending no one with influence. To say the least, this is a job that calls for a highly developed sense of balance. Casualties do occur among chief editors—*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, for example, had six chief editors in its first nine years—but the interesting thing, in view of the difficulties of the job, is the length of time that most chief editors manage to survive (even if their tenure is briefer than ministers'). This suggests that chief editors, at least in the Brezhnev period, have not been a major independent force in setting the individual style of a newspaper; rather, they maintain their positions by their adaptability. We shall give some specific illustrations below.

## THE CHIEF EDITOR'S STATUS AND CAREER BACKGROUND

In recognition of his importance, the editor-in-chief has high social and political status. The system of overlapping memberships operates at all levels of the Soviet hierarchy. Thus the chief editor of a republic-level newspaper will typically be a member of the Central Committee of that republic's party. The editor of the Latvian Komsomol newspaper in Riga is a member of the Central Committee of the Latvian Komsomol, and the same protocol system appears to hold all the way down to the local level.

A similar system applies to the question of who hires whom. The position of editor-in-chief is important enough to be specified on the official *nomenklatura* of the level to which his newspaper corresponds. The editors of *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* are on the *nomenklatura* of the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat or Politburo, while that of *Moskovskaia pravda* is on the list of the Moscow City Committee. Each level of importance, finally, has correspondingly different gradations of privilege. One of our respondents related that when the chief editor of *Sel'skaia zhizn'*, Alek-

seev, moved to the top spot at the more prestigious *Sovetskaia Rossiia* in 1971, his standard of living took a sudden jump, for with his new job went a Kremlin ration and access to better closed stores than the ones he had been entitled to use before.

How does one become the editor-in-chief of a Soviet newspaper?<sup>1</sup> Chief editors are often not journalists by profession or background. For example, at the time of his appointment as editor-in-chief of *Moskovskaia pravda*, Lev Spiridonov was so new to journalism that he was not yet a member of the Journalists' Union. Nor are the subsequent careers of editors-in-chief necessarily confined to the media: Former editor-in-chief Borisov of *Moskovskii komsomolets*, for example, went on to become director of Lenin Stadium before he was named head of the *Moskovskii Rabochii* publishing house.

A striking characteristic of the careers of many (although not all) editors-in-chief is that they have served one or more tours in the apparatus of the Central Committee. In some instances, they are professional officials (*rabotniki*) of the Central Committee, and many have risen from early backgrounds in the provincial Komsomol or Party apparatus. Many have gone to the Higher Party School, which has a journalism department. Those who started out as journalists typically have served a "political tour" before their first major appointment to a position as deputy chief editor. However, these are not hard-and-fast rules; it is apparently possible to reach the top without passing through any of the stages just mentioned.

What is not clear is whether chief editors reach their positions thanks to some high-level patron to whom they happen to be connected. To be sure, examples of patronage do come to light, most notably that of Adzhubei, the former chief editor of *Izvestiia*, who was Khrushchev's son-in-law, or Subbotin, who apparently became chief editor of *Trud* because of a long-standing tie to Shelepin, or Alekseev, now chief editor of *Izvestiia*, who obtained his first major editorial position because of support from then Central Committee Secretary V. I. Poliakov. However, most chief editors do not appear to have such solid patronage ties to the top. Indeed, the supposed close relations between *Literaturnaia gazeta* chief editor Chakovskii and Brezhnev are said to have begun only *after* Chakovskii had been the head of the newspaper for some time. We know of no important editors from the "Dnepropetrovsk Mafia," from which so many top Party and state positions have been filled during the latter half of Brezhnev's rule. Rather, it is more likely that the personal ties of the future chief editor are located within the Propaganda Department itself.

## TRANSMISSION OF ORDERS TO THE CHIEF EDITOR: HOW IS IT DONE?

The Soviet editor-in-chief, regardless of his background, must stay abreast of the most current line and adjust the coverage of his newspaper to the latest official priorities. How does he stay in touch? The most important formal mechanism is a regular biweekly meeting at the Propaganda Department, held for the chief editors

<sup>1</sup> Information on the careers of Soviet journalists can be found regularly in the organ of the Journalists' Union, *Zhurnalist*, in a special column called *Naznacheniia* (*Appointments*). There the reader will find, for every newly appointed person from the rank of correspondent on up, the date of birth, a brief description of educational background, and highlights of previous employment, as well as mention of any term of service in the apparatus of the Party. Systematic analysis of these career data could provide a better understanding of the Soviet media elite.

of all the major media. There the editors are instructed on the latest nuances of policy and are told what types of coverage to stress in their newspapers.

What goes on at those meetings? Our respondents did not have a very precise idea, because as a general rule chief editors do not give their staffs details of what happens there.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in this as in everything else in the Soviet Union, there are partial exceptions, depending on the chief editor's personality. One chief editor passed along tidbits to his staff because he happened to find them amusing. Thus his staff learned how the official line on De Gaulle changed in the early 1960s: From one moment to the next, the assembled editors were told by the Propaganda Department to halt all negative references and cartoons, and to take a positive approach instead. The prevailing tone of such instructions is apparently one of barely veiled cynicism. In another case, the cynicism was even clearer: The editors were informed that a decree on public drunkenness was due to appear in a few weeks. They were told to increase their coverage of public complaints about drunkenness to give the appearance that the decree was a response to public demand. In sum, chief editors return to their newspapers with quite specific and explicit guidance from the Central Committee.

Most of the communication between the Central Committee and the newspaper takes place through the chief editor, whose office (at least in the case of the major Moscow newspapers) is connected to Central Committee headquarters by a closed telephone line called (as are all such closed lines) the *vertushka*.<sup>3</sup> Lesser newspapers are connected to whatever political authority corresponds to their level. How closely chief editors stay in touch with the Central Committee appears to be partly a matter of individual personality. *Izvestiia* chief editor Alekseev has the reputation for checking carefully with the Propaganda Department over any story that might cause any problems. Others rely more on their own intuition. However, as we shall see, chief editors are told in no uncertain terms if they have incurred the Propaganda Department's displeasure, and instances of outright firing are not uncommon. Our respondents frequently noted that the job of chief editor is a stressful one.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGES IN CHIEF EDITORS: THE CASE OF ALEKSEEV

What difference does it make when a new chief editor is appointed? Let us begin with a specific case. In the spring and summer of 1976 more than a dozen individuals changed jobs at major newspaper positions, the largest such shift since 1965. The most important changes involved *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*: Former *Pravda* chief editor M. V. Zimianin was promoted to the rank of Central Committee Secretary, and former *Izvestiia* chief editor L. N. Tolkunov moved up to the top position in the

<sup>2</sup> Our Polish respondents were much better informed on comparable meetings at the Polish Central Committee. See Jane Leftwich Curry, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Organization and Control of the Media*, The Rand Corporation, N-1514/1, December 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Terminology is somewhat vague here: The most important and sensitive closed-circuit system is that which communicates with the Kremlin. However, it is possible that in popular parlance any closed-circuit system in Moscow that connects to higher political authority is called "*kremlevskaia*." For example, a memoir by the former city-desk editor of *Moskovskaia pravda* describes the editor-in-chief of that newspaper talking to the head of the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee over a *vertushka* that he calls "*kremlevskaia*" (Anatolii Limberger, "Posledniaia sessiia: iz vospominanii zhurnalista," *Vremia i my*, No. 45, September 1979, p. 146).

Novosti press agency.<sup>4</sup> Those moves started a cascade of changes: three more editors-in-chief were appointed to major dailies, followed a few months later by three new first deputy chief editors.<sup>5</sup> All of the changes appear to have been promotions (with the minor exception of V. N. Nekrasov), a ladder-like sequence caused by the moves of the *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* editors and the death of N. A. Zakolupin, the editor of *Sel'skaia zhizn'*. Aside from the fact that it took over a year to find a replacement for Zakolupin, there does not seem to be any fundamental political significance to the changes—unlike the situation in 1965, when all three of the State Committees dealing with the media changed hands, resulting in a wave of replacements in the major media organs. Those moves were interpreted as part of the post-Khrushchev shake-up and can now be seen, in retrospect, as steps in Brezhnev's consolidation of power.

Does that mean that the chief editors of Soviet newspapers, for all their prominence and apparent power, are interchangeable nonentities? That was not the view of one Western analysis, which speculated that the changes might have some effect on the editorial policies of the newspapers involved, because some of the individuals showed interesting differences in background: The byline of the new *Pravda* editor, Afanas'ev, had appeared frequently over moderate-sounding articles on economic questions, whereas Kosolapov's name was connected to writings with an anti-intellectual and anti-technocratic slant.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of that information, it was speculated that Afanas'ev should be considered a "moderate" and Kosolapov a "conservative," and that their appointments might be intended to counterbalance one another. The implicit assumption, in other words, is that the choice of an editor-in-chief does make a difference, and that the individual's background can form the basis for inferences about the possible impact on the editorial line of the newspaper he heads. Is this assumption warranted?

Our respondents provided some personal impressions of one of the personalities involved in the promotions of 1976, P. F. Alekseev, currently the editor-in-chief of *Izvestiia*. Now 69 years old, Alekseev broke into the national press at *Pravda*, where he worked as a correspondent from 1953 to 1959. After a brief tour of duty in the

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Trends in Communist Media*, April 28, 1976, pp. 17-19. This publication is an invaluable source of information on Soviet media.

<sup>5</sup> FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, July 21, 1976. The complete list of changes involved is as follows:

Individual	Old Job	New Job
M. V. Zimianin	<i>Pravda</i> CE	CC Secretary
L. N. Tolkunov	<i>Izvestiia</i> CE	Novosti head
N. A. Zakolupin	<i>Sel.zhizn'</i> CE	Died 6/75
V. G. Afanas'ev	<i>Kommunist</i> CE	<i>Pravda</i> CE
R. I. Kosolapov	<i>Pravda</i> 1stDCE	<i>Kommunist</i> CE
P. F. Alekseev	<i>Sov.Ross.</i> CE	<i>Izvestiia</i> CE
A. I. Lukovets	<i>Pravda</i> DCE	<i>Sov.Ross.</i> CE
A. P. Kharlamov	<i>Sov.Ross.</i> 1stDCE	<i>Sel.zhizn'</i> CE
Iu.A. Skliarov	Dep. CC dept. head	<i>Pravda</i> 1stDCE
V. I. Novikov	CC instructor	<i>Sov.Ross.</i> 1stDCE
V. V. Makarov	Komsomol CC	<i>Koms.pravda</i> 1stDCE
V. N. Nekrasov	<i>Pravda</i> DCE	Novosti pol. obs.
V. V. Maevskii	<i>Pravda</i> pol. obs.	Died 1/75
G. M. Ratiani	<i>Pravda</i> ed.(USA)	<i>Pravda</i> pol. obs.

<sup>6</sup> FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, April 28, 1976, p. 18.

Central Committee apparatus, he spent the next eleven years at *Sel'skaia zhizn'*, first as deputy chief editor (1960-1962) and then as chief editor (1962-1971). He subsequently rose to the position of chief editor of *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (1971-1976) before moving on to *Izvestiia*.<sup>7</sup>

One might suppose that an editor-in-chief who began his Moscow career in the year Stalin died and who first reached the post of chief editor at the high point of Khrushchevian liberalism might show some of the signs of the more permissive atmosphere of those years, as did Adzhubei of *Izvestiia*, Subbotin of *Trud*, and Syrokomskii of *Literaturnaia gazeta*. However, according to our respondents, Alekseev's career was different from the beginning.

Alekseev owed the start of his career to a fortunate political friendship. He began his rise to the national level from Uzbekistan, where he had spent the war years as editor of *Khlopkovodstvo* (*Cotton-Growing*), a trade organ. Shortly after the war, he happened to give a job on his newspaper to a man in temporary career difficulties. That man, V. I. Poliakov, went on to become Central Committee Secretary in charge of agriculture under Khrushchev, and as he rose he took Alekseev with him. By the early 1960s, Alekseev had become deputy chief of the agricultural section of *Pravda* and then chief editor of *Sel'skaia zhizn'* (*Rural Life*), the main Soviet agricultural daily.

However, Poliakov shared Khrushchev's disgrace in 1964, but at that point Alekseev's career took a new turn, for he managed not to be dragged down with his previous patron. Part of the explanation seems to be that Alekseev took the winning side in an important debate over agricultural policy that pitted Polianskii and later Brezhnev against Voronov and perhaps Kosygin between 1966 and 1969. The issue was substantial: To rescue Soviet agriculture from the doldrums, the "agricultural lobby" advocated a program of massive capital investment, while economic reformers argued for better agricultural management instead.<sup>8</sup> *Sel'skaia zhizn'* and Alekseev polemicized with liberal economists, thus clearly taking the side of the Polianskii-Brezhnev faction. By 1970 the battle had been won; and it does not seem altogether coincidental that in that same year Alekseev was singled out for an important medal and the following year he rose to the chief editorship of a more important daily, *Sovetskaia Rossiia*.

It soon became apparent after Khrushchev's fall that his successors intended to be much more conservative in their treatment of the media, and when Alekseev arrived at *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, our respondents say, he imposed a stern hand. He surrounded himself with a hand-picked team of deputy editors and ended the relatively free and informal style that had characterized the newspaper in the 1960s (although it had already become less informal under Alekseev's immediate predecessor, Moskovskii). As the newspaper grew grayer, circulation fell, to the point that Alekseev, in an attempt to reverse the decline, created a special subscription department in the editorial offices and even resorted to sending staff members around the country to promote the newspaper at regional Party committees.

To reshape *Sovetskaia Rossiia* to his own specifications, Alekseev made a number of moves that show how a chief editor manages to affect the content and style

<sup>7</sup> *Prominent Personalities in the USSR*, Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this episode, see Hahn; George Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1982; and Gustafson, 1981.

of his newspaper. He introduced a hierarchical and authoritarian style of management. He transformed the eighth floor of *Sovetskaia Rossiia*'s editorial offices into a separate suite with its own private *bufet* (cafeteria), and staffers who had business with the management had to take a cantankerous elevator up from the fifth floor. Having thus assured the necessary distance between commanders and troops, Alekseev ran the newspaper in a style that one of our respondents called "oriental." Haughty and cutting with subordinates, Alekseev was so eagerly responsive to superiors that when the Central Committee called him on the telephone he reportedly took the calls standing, virtually at attention.

Alekseev ingratiated himself with influential higher-ups by commissioning articles from them for which they received lavish fees. We were told, for example, that Leonid Zamiatin (then head of TASS and now Central Committee Secretary in charge of the Department of International Information) was paid a monthly fee of 400 rubles for his weekly "International Review" column, a sum that represented one-fifth of the newspaper's budget for nonstaff authors' fees. As usual in such cases, the articles were written not by Zamiatin himself but by one of his assistants, such as Iurii Kornilov. Thus, thanks to Zamiatin's byline, *Sovetskaia Rossiia* enjoyed unimpeachably authoritative commentary in its international section, while Alekseev bolstered his network of political protectors.

Soon after Alekseev's arrival at *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, the newspaper started to appear in separate Moscow and province editions, just as several other national papers do. For logistical reasons, the out-of-town version was signed to press in midafternoon, so that it could start on its way to remote cities throughout the country, while the Moscow edition was put to bed at 11:00 p.m. In his cautious way, however, Alekseev made sure that the earlier deadline would not produce trouble, by dividing the newspaper's coverage in two: "Safe" articles were put in the provincial edition, while any potentially controversial material was held up for the Moscow edition, thus giving the editors time to consult with the Central Committee staff.

These are small examples, but together they give the flavor of Alekseev's management style. He has evidently pursued similar policies since arriving at *Izvestiia*. One of his first moves there in 1976 was to curtail the use of feuilletons, which are vehicles for social criticism and satire whose authors often have considerable latitude.

Alekseev's rise can hardly be considered routine or accidental. After all, he survived the disgrace of his first patrons and went on to two more major promotions after Brezhnev had consolidated his power. Nor can he be considered an unknown quantity to people in high places, since he has been around for a long time. One can only conclude that in promoting a man of his sort, the Party leaders of the Soviet media are pursuing a deliberate policy. Indeed, Alekseev appears to be a man of his times, if perhaps grayer than most, for the steady trend in media management under Brezhnev has been toward stricter management and orthodoxy, less creative latitude for editors and staff, and more emphasis on the role of newspapers as mobilizers and educators. And the chief editor is the primary instrument in the enforcement of this line.

To explore this issue further, we turn now to the case of Moscow's party newspaper, *Moskovskaia pravda*, and that of the main organ of the Writers' Union, *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

## INTERACTION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND EDITORIAL PROCESS: THE CASE OF MOSKOVSKAIA PRAVDA

Alongside the major dailies published by all-Union organizations, such as *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, and *Trud*, Moscow newsstands also carry a number of local papers representing the city-level organizations of the capital. *Moskovskaia pravda*, in particular, is the organ of the City Committee (*gorkom*) of the Party and of the Moscow city Soviet; along with its sister publication, *Leninskoe znamia* (produced by the Moscow province Party organization and the Moscow province Soviet), *Moskovskaia pravda* is the voice of the Party organization of the country's largest urban area. *Moskovskaia pravda* provides an especially good case study for understanding the roles and purposes of the Party press, because one of the largest clusters of former Soviet journalists and editors now living in the West consists of former *Moskovskaia pravda* staff members. Thus we have a more detailed picture of editorial processes at *Moskovskaia pravda* than those at any other Soviet daily.

What is of interest above all is the relationship of a Soviet newspaper to higher authority—the ways in which the wishes of the authorities are translated into media coverage and the degree of initiative and latitude available to editors and reporters. We shall take up two important aspects of the relationship: first, the roles of the chief editor at *Moskovskaia pravda*, and, second, the pattern of relations between the newspaper staff and the Moscow City Committee.

### Moskovskaia Pravda Under Three Chiefs

Since 1958, *Moskovskaia pravda* has had three editors-in-chief, each with a distinctive personality and style: Aleksandr Mikhailovich Subbotin (1958-1964), later editor of *Trud*; Iurii Ivanovich Balanenko (1964-1972), who went on to become deputy chief editor of *Izvestiia*; and Lev N. Spiridonov (1972-present). Drawing upon the recollections of former staff members, can we determine what impact each of these men had and what the consequences may have been for the content of the newspaper?

The most highly praised of the three editors, at least by our respondents, was Subbotin. Much of his career was associated with the name of former Politburo member A. N. Shelepin. The link went at least as far back as the mid-1950s, when Subbotin became editor of *Moskovskii komsomolets*, the organ of the Moscow Komsomol organization. At the time, Shelepin was himself in charge of that organization.<sup>9</sup> In 1958, the old *Moskovskaia pravda*, which had served both the *gorkom* and *obkom* of Moscow, was turned into the organ of the *gorkom* alone, and Subbotin became its head for six years. In 1964, he moved up to the position of chief editor of *Trud*, the organ of the All-Union Council of Labor Unions (and subsequently became a member of its Presidium). Here the association with Shelepin is less clear but seems probable nevertheless. At the time of Subbotin's appointment to *Trud*, Shelepin was Party Secretary and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, and was then at the height of his career. In 1967, his star now on the wane, Shelepin became head of the trade union organization and, as such, was once more Subbotin's direct boss. Our respondents reported some evidence of closer working relations than

<sup>9</sup> According to the 1970 edition of *Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR*, Shelepin was head of the Komsomol from 1952 to 1958.



usual between a chief editor and a high Party official (such as Shelepin's attending *Trud* editorial board meetings on occasion), but in any event Subbotin survived the fall of Shelepin in 1974 and stayed on as chief editor of *Trud*. Subbotin thus illustrates a fairly uncommon type of editor-in-chief—the man with clearly visible associations with a specific Politburo leader. Our respondents believe that Subbotin is also one of the rare editors-in-chief who served as a vehicle for the transmission of certain of his patron's views in his newspapers, had visible connections with his patron on the job, and may have enjoyed a measure of independence from the Propaganda Department as a result.

Balancenkov, the second of the three editors, came up initially by way of the Komsomol. A graduate of the Moscow Polygraphic Institute (the foremost training institution for printing and publishing), where he had been secretary of the local Komsomol organization, he soon became secretary of the Komsomol *gorkom* of Moscow and then a staff member in the central apparatus of the Komsomol. His newspaper career began at that point, with an assignment as deputy editor of *Vecherniaia Moskva*, the evening daily of the Moscow *gorkom* and Moscow City Executive Committee. From there he moved to the Central Committee of the Party, where he worked as an *instruktor*, presumably in the Propaganda Department. Our respondents were not aware of any particular personal connections with powerful sponsors in Balancenkov's case. His career is more typical of the norm for most Soviet editors: Before he was appointed to the top position at *Moskovskaia pravda*, he served a stint in the apparatus of the Central Committee.

The third editor, Spiridonov, belongs to yet another type: Connected by marriage to the family of the late Politburo member Voznesensky, Spiridonov has a *kandidat* degree in Philosophy (whether genuine or ghost-written our respondents could not say); he served for a time in an embassy; and he did a stint as secretary of the Moscow *gorkom* of the Komsomol and a tour as *instruktor* in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee—but not, apparently, in the press section. The main oddity in Spiridonov's career is that he has had some overseas experience, which has not traditionally been the case for newspaper editors.<sup>10</sup>

What, if not experience in journalism, makes a good editor-in-chief? Understandably, the perspective of our respondents on this question is not necessarily the same as that of the Propaganda Department of the *gorkom* or the Central Committee. First, all three of the editors profiled above knew thoroughly the rules of the game, and none was ever fired from his job or connected with any professional scandal. Nevertheless, they had major differences in style. Subbotin was discussed with admiration and respect by many of our respondents, and several went so far as to describe him as the best editor-in-chief in the Soviet Union today. What makes Subbotin stand out?

First, Subbotin appeared to our respondents to be a talented man, imaginative and solid. He protected his staff against criticism from higher authority, arguing that political mistakes are the editors' responsibility, not the writers'. But most of all, Subbotin did not hesitate to tackle original and potentially controversial topics, and consequently he turned whatever newspaper he touched into a more interesting

<sup>10</sup> International and domestic careers in the media, our data show, tend to be quite separate from the earliest years on. However, our respondents suggested that a new trend may have begun in the 1970s of appointing media leaders who have had broader exposure to the outside world. Thus the traditional lines of demarcation may be fading, a point worthy of further investigation.

place to work. Readership went up, both at *Moskovskaia pravda* and subsequently at *Trud*. Even *Moskovskii komsomolets* became a more popular newspaper when Subbotin headed it in the mid-1950s (incidentally, many of our respondents began their writing careers as free-lancers for *Moskovskii komsomolets*). Indeed, a newspaper like *Moskovskii komsomolets* plays a more important role in recruiting talent than journalism schools do. Subbotin, who is considered to have a talent for spotting able writers, surrounded himself with a hand-picked staff, several of whom he subsequently took with him to *Moskovskaia pravda* and to *Trud*.<sup>11</sup>

Balanenko, in contrast, appears to have been a pleasant mediocrity. Former *Moskovskaia pravda* staffers spoke of him with affection, but as soon as he took over from Subbotin, the circulation of *Moskovskaia pravda* dropped off. Balanenko's style was highly personal, and whereas for Subbotin personal relations took second place to professional ones, Balanenko retained long-established ties with former fellow students and past associates and remained loyal to them. While he was editor-in-chief at *Moskovskaia pravda*, editorial board meetings became more lively and informal. Like Subbotin, Balanenko used his editorial board to raise questions and get preliminary reactions to potentially controversial ideas.<sup>12</sup> Balanenko's attitudes toward his staff were relaxed. He would meet them after hours to go drinking; and when he went to the Journalists' Club, he sat with the ordinary staff members of his paper rather than with his fellow editors. He apparently had some of the style of Khrushchev—a seemingly unsophisticated spontaneity and some of the same occasional unpredictability. On one occasion, for example, Balanenko astonished his staff by approving several articles on telepathy. This brought gibes from *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and the Leningrad magazine *Zvezda*, and it also brought irritated phone calls from the *gorkom*, which had no particular feelings about telepathy but disliked the unfavorable publicity its newspaper was getting from the rest of the media. Nevertheless, Balanenko defended the young reporter who had written them.

Spiridonov, finally, had a different style from the other two. Whereas respondents remembered the communicativeness of Subbotin and Balanenko, they remembered Spiridonov's dryness. At the daily meetings of the editorial staff, there were no laughs, no jokes; everyone sat quietly, even fearfully, for Spiridonov was a brusque and irritable man. While all three editors-in-chief observed carefully the rule that *Moskovskaia pravda* speaks for the Moscow *gorkom*, Spiridonov was perhaps the most punctilious of the three on this point. Instead of consulting with his editorial board about new ideas—thus covering his decisions to some extent by gaining their assent—Spiridonov consulted daily with the *gorkom*, passing along the

<sup>11</sup> As an example of Subbotin's style, one of our respondents mentioned the case of *Trud* correspondent Edvard Gonzalis. Gonzalis had previously worked on the staff of *Moskovskaia pravda* under Subbotin. After Subbotin went to *Trud*, Gonzalis stayed on at *Moskovskaia pravda*, but after a time the new editor-in-chief, Balanenko, fired him for what our respondent termed "serious political mistakes." Nevertheless, Subbotin snapped him up immediately and put him to work at *Trud*. Gonzalis became one of that newspaper's best special correspondents. Once he wrote a feature story that caused considerable comment within the Party hierarchy, perhaps reaching as high as the Politburo itself. It concerned a catastrophic decline in productivity at a certain hog-raising complex. What caused the comment was that the complex was equipped with imported French equipment. Thus the article, by implication, called into question one of the central features of Soviet agricultural policy in the early 1970s. That, said our respondents, illustrates Subbotin's manner.

<sup>12</sup> The editorial board of a daily newspaper, unlike that of a journal or even of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, has no outsiders among its members. Therefore it is sometimes a more informal and meaningful working group than is the board of a journal.

*gorkom*'s opinion at the editorial meeting. Because of Spiridonov's humorless, authoritarian style, staff members did not venture their own opinions or take chances.

According to our respondents, the three contrasting personalities of Subbotin, Balanenko, and Spiridonov capture the evolution of official policy toward the press over the last twenty years. Subbotin is a product of the optimistic and relatively open-minded late 1950s, similar in that respect to Adzhubei (editor-in-chief of *Izvestiia* until 1964). Balanenko typifies the soft-spoken style of the early Brezhnev period, while Spiridonov's harsh and mechanical style expresses the increasingly repressive official treatment of the press in the 1970s. Yet our respondents noted that similar changes took place in the working style of an individual if he remained in place throughout these three periods, as, for example, deputy editor Syrokonskii of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, or even Subbotin, who remained in charge of a major newspaper until the late 1970s.

How do these differences actually affect the style and content of a newspaper? First, the chief editor has an impact through his choices of whom he hires and fires. Both Subbotin and Balanenko had a relatively liberal attitude toward Jews and hired several of them for the staff of *Moskovskaia pravda*. Our respondents (although, of course, most are not unbiased on this point) argued that this had an important effect on the quality of the newspaper, because as a general rule good writers and reporters are scarce in Soviet journalism. The all-Union newspapers generally hire the best ones, which means lower-ranking newspapers get mediocre journalists—except for one thing: The all-Union newspapers generally do not hire Jews. Therefore, an editor-in-chief who is willing to hire Jewish reporters can easily build a good staff. The most spectacular illustration of that principle is *Literaturnaia gazeta*, half of whose staff in the late 1960s was Jewish, but the same applies to a number of lesser newspapers, including *Moskovskaia pravda*. Spiridonov, however, ended his predecessors' liberal policy, perhaps reflecting the growing official anti-Semitism of the 1970s.

As for the editor-in-chief's overall impact, the hypothesis that the chief editor makes a substantial difference in the degree of initiative or latitude allowed a newspaper requires much more careful investigation. While the style of work may change under a new editor, it is not at all clear that the actual output of newspapers changes much more than marginally from one editor-in-chief to another (except when the change in leadership coincides with a major change in the policy of the Central Committee, as in the elimination of Adzhubei from *Izvestiia* in 1964 and the appointment of Syrokonskii to *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1966).

There is a counterhypothesis to consider: The most significant element determining the overall tone of a newspaper is its relationship to its parent body (the Moscow *gorkom*, in the case of *Moskovskaia pravda*), not the composition of the newspaper's staff or the identity of the editor-in-chief. To illustrate, we turn to *Moskovskaia pravda*'s relationship to the Moscow *gorkom*.

### **Supervision of Moskovskaia Pravda by the Moscow Gorkom**

The most striking feature of *Moskovskaia pravda*'s relations with higher political authorities is that, as the organ of the Moscow City Committee (*gorkom*) of the Party, its closest working relations are with the Propaganda Department of that body, not with the all-Union Central Committee. Indeed, one of the advantages of

focusing on *Moskovskaia pravda* is that its daily contacts with the *gorkom* are numerous and close, and consequently many of our respondents could talk about them on the basis of abundant personal experience. They could provide little first-hand information about relations with the Central Committee, because for most of them, this was a remote place.

We begin nevertheless with the Central Committee, because of its role as the overall command center for the Soviet press. The head of *Moskovskaia pravda*, along with the other editors-in-chief of newspapers located in Moscow, attends the regular twice-monthly briefings conducted by the Newspaper Section of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department. To catch the direction of the wind, *Moskovskaia pravda* staff read the major newspapers just as ordinary citizens do. A series of consecutive articles on labor discipline in *Trud*, for example, suggested that a Party-state decree on the subject could be expected soon, and an article in *Pravda* disapproving of the population's excessive interest in murder cases was taken as a signal to *Moskovskaia pravda* that coverage of such cases should be curtailed.

This very indirect contact with top policymaking circles reflects not only the fact that *Moskovskaia pravda* reports to a lower rung in the hierarchy, but also that its role is different from that of the all-Union newspapers. The controversial, path-breaking article on the rehabilitation of ex-convicts is not for *Moskovskaia pravda*: The privilege (and also the headaches) of handling such strong stuff is reserved on the whole to higher-ranking newspapers. *Moskovskaia pravda*'s station is more modest, and so also is its staff's conception of their allowed latitude. Thus, while *Moskovskaia pravda*'s coverage of city affairs is extensive, if MVD Minister Shchelokov wishes to make controversial revelations about crime or alcoholism, he will choose *Literaturnaia gazeta* or *Pravda* instead. Nor does *Moskovskaia pravda*, with its relatively modest staff (perhaps 60 professionals in the mid-1970s) and its modest budget, maintain well-connected, influential, wide-ranging pundits like Agranovskii of *Izvestiia*. In sum, *Moskovskaia pravda*'s opportunities for testing the boundaries of the permissible are fewer than those of the major all-Union dailies, and consequently there are fewer occasions for direct contact with the Central Committee.

Since *Moskovskaia pravda* is the organ of the Moscow Party organization, its immediate boss is not the Central Committee but the Moscow *gorkom*. The chief editor is a member of the *gorkom* and attends its regular Wednesday meetings. The *gorkom*'s mechanism for supervision of the Moscow press is a replica in miniature of that of the Central Committee. Since 1973, the chief of the *gorkom* propaganda department has been A. M. Roganov; his deputy, E. S. Averin, had been managing editor of *Moskovskaia pravda* before becoming chief editor of *Moskovskii komsomol's*. Bernikov was in charge of newspapers (whether as instructor or as a section head our respondents could not say). All in all, some seven or eight instructors at the *gorkom* are in charge of supervising the city-level press, which includes not only newspapers but also publishing houses, such as *Moskovskii rabochii*.

As a result of the past associations of people like Averin with *Moskovskaia pravda*, the *gorkom* and the newspaper staff are familiar with one another's workings. Deputy chief editor Gengauz had been a press *instruktor* at the *gorkom* before coming to *Moskovskaia pravda*. Gengauz was hired by the *gorkom* under Khrushchev, served as deputy chief editor of *Moskovskaia pravda* under two successive chief editors, and has had perhaps the longest continuous association with *Moskov-*

*skaia pravda* of any of the top staff members. Thanks to such long-standing cross-ties, the *gorkom* and its main newspaper presumably understand one another well.

Nevertheless, the relationship between them is complicated, containing a number of subtle calculations and unspoken gradations of rank. Our respondents observed that the Moscow *gorkom* tends to have a high turnover rate (although this observation apparently does not apply to the higher staff ranks—people like Averin and Bernikov appear to have served in their positions for a long time), because it is considered a stepping-stone for ambitious functionaries on their way up. And one way to rise is to become an editor. On the other hand, a figure like Spiridonov apparently owes his position primarily to his experience in the Central Committee apparatus and to his personal contacts there. From the standpoint of protocol, as chief editor of *Moskovskaia pravda* and member of the *gorkom*, he stands equal to a *gorkom* department head and higher than a *gorkom* instructor. Our respondents reported that although Spiridonov treated the head of the *gorkom* propaganda department, Roganov, with respect, the lower-ranking staff of the *gorkom* complained about Spiridonov's superior attitude. Nevertheless, Spiridonov is described as an accomplished bureaucrat and politician, who checks with the *gorkom* each morning to obtain their reaction to the day's issue of *Moskovskaia pravda* and is careful to take account of their comments, making amendments and retractions where necessary and passing along the comments at the daily *Moskovskaia pravda* staff planning meeting.

In addition to constant contact with the chief editor, the *gorkom* communicates its wishes to *Moskovskaia pravda* through an elaborate network of everyday contacts—more elaborate, in fact, than that between the Central Committee and a publication such as *Literaturnaia gazeta*.<sup>13</sup> Whereas in the latter most of the official contacts take place through the chief editor and his first deputy, in *Moskovskaia pravda* each of the major department heads and even staff writers are apparently free to conduct their own relations with the *gorkom*. One of our respondents, a former department head, visited the *gorkom* routinely, for example, to obtain approval for his three-month plans, visiting not only the propaganda department but any other departments that might be affected by his articles. Industrial department editors and staff visited the *gorkom* to obtain suggestions for article topics and writers to do them, and also for suggestions about which factories to visit and write about. Whereas *Literaturnaia gazeta* staff writers described the Central Committee as a remote place with which they had had no direct contact, some *Moskovskaia pravda* staff members were actually on a familiar “ty” basis with some of the apparatus workers at the *gorkom*.

As an example, a former *Moskovskaia pravda* department head visited the head of a *gorkom* department to obtain approval for *Moskovskaia pravda*'s proposed three-month plan on matters falling within the *gorkom* department's area of responsibility:

[The department head] used to look through the items that were related to his department and say something like this: “This is good; that's good; about this other item I'm not so sure, but it's your business, put it in if you want. Now in my opinion, you don't have enough material here on [a particular subject]. See if you can include more on that.” He then went on to give me

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix D.

a little lecture on the importance of [the subject], telling me that the *gorkom* secretariat was very interested in the subject, and that we should focus public attention on this problem. Thus I had no difficulty determining what was most important in his mind.

As our respondents described it, there is a built-in tension in the relationship between the *gorkom* and *Moskovskaia pravda*. On the one hand, *Moskovskaia pravda* is the *gorkom*'s press organ. Whereas *Literaturnaia gazeta*, for example, can address a controversial subject without committing the government or the Party to an official position, *Moskovskaia pravda* is the official voice of the Moscow Party. This, combined with the fact that the instructors of the *gorkom* press department are described as being no less inclined to the quiet life than the rest of Soviet officialdom, tends to constrict *Moskovskaia pravda*'s scope for initiative and to confine it to safe treatment of safe subjects.

On the other hand, one of the missions of the Soviet press is to show the population that the Party is on the job, that it shares the everyday concerns of the citizens, and that it has their interests at heart. The *gorkom* therefore wants *Moskovskaia pravda* to be critical. If gangsters prey on the vacationing workers of a certain Moscow factory at the factory's vacation home in the Crimea (to take an actual case mentioned by our respondents), city officials may be as indignant about that as the victims themselves. But do they consider such news fit to print? Although this question arises on a more modest scale in *Moskovskaia pravda* than it does for, say, *Pravda* or *Izvestiia*, it must be dealt with nonetheless.

The following examples give some idea of the gradation of roles involved: On major topics, such as crime or alcohol, *Moskovskaia pravda* staff wait for orders from the *gorkom* before undertaking an article. For example, at one point, the *gorkom* gave the newspaper instructions to start a campaign against illicit distilling. On the other hand, *Moskovskaia pravda* initiated a regular column on traffic problems. It required prior approval from the *gorkom*, but once the campaign had been launched, the *gorkom* praised it as an example of good journalism. The first step was to go to the chief editor, Balanenko, with the idea. Balanenko greeted it with enthusiasm and took it personally to the *gorkom* to gain approval. As a result, beginning in the late 1960s, *Moskovskaia pravda* carried a regular feature called "Safe Traffic," which gave information about accidents, identified those convicted of drunken driving, reported violators to their places of work, and so forth. This was a modest initiative compared to those of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, yet even such small undertakings require clearance from the *gorkom*.

The initiative of *Moskovskaia pravda* is further limited by the fact that the Moscow City Committee has the reputation of being highly conservative, more so than the Central Committee or the *gorkom* of Leningrad. Even so, the *gorkom* expects *Moskovskaia pravda* to play the role of the Party's tribune in some areas, particularly concerning shortcomings in everyday city services. One respondent stated:

We were advised to write *more* critical articles about bad service of the population at the stores, about mess and dirt in eating facilities, about theft of groceries, about shortcomings in the operation of the city's transit system.

When the reader opens a newspaper and sees an article strongly criticizing a chairman of a *raispolkom* [district executive committee] for poorly organized trade in his district, he reads that article and says, "This is *our* newspaper; it protects us. Look how they criticized Ivanov: Well done!"

For this reason, officials of the Moscow Party Committee often contribute articles of their own. As recently as the 1960s, *Moskovskaia pravda* staff writers regularly wrote articles that appeared under the bylines of major *gorkom* officials, because *gorkom* departments had few people on their staffs who could be counted on to write well. Since the late 1960s, however, as educational levels have risen, the articles contributed by *gorkom* officials have been written directly by their staffs.<sup>14</sup>

The potential tension among the various roles of *Moskovskaia pravda* becomes delicate in the eyes of the *gorkom* on the few occasions when *Moskovskaia pravda* has material that is directly or indirectly critical of the Moscow Party apparatus itself. The general rule, according to one respondent, is that *Moskovskaia pravda* cannot criticize any level higher than district committee (*raikom*), and even that only indirectly and with the express authorization of the second secretary of the *gorkom*. This suggests that such articles are not the result of *Moskovskaia pravda*'s initiative—that more often than not an article criticizing the work of a *raikom* or the performance of a major enterprise within a *raikom* is a signal from the *gorkom* that a *raikom* official or an enterprise director is about to be dismissed. Nevertheless, our respondents recalled at least one case in which criticism of a *raikom* first secretary and his industrial department chief was the direct result of a personal antagonism between chief editor Spiridonov and a veteran *raikom* secretary named Volodin. It was relatively safe to quarrel with Volodin, because he was an older man on the verge of retirement, not particularly well-connected in the *gorkom*, and not one of the stronger *raikom* secretaries. Our respondents emphasized that this was a very unusual combination of circumstances, for normally the chief editor of *Moskovskaia pravda* is considered to be roughly the equal, from the standpoint of protocol, of *raikom* first secretaries; consequently, the chief editor has every interest in getting along with them, to say nothing of the fact that, because they share common backgrounds and outlooks, they are likely to work well together.

In this particular case, however, Volodin had angered Spiridonov by his criticism of material in the newspaper. Spiridonov, apparently out of pique, ordered the chief of his industrial department, at that time a man named Kurbatov, to prepare an article criticizing an enterprise in Volodin's district. After the details were checked, the material was cleared with the *gorkom*; its approval apparently indicated Volodin's weak position. The article reflected badly on the performance of the *raikom*, particularly on the *raikom* secretary for industry, stating that

the *raikom* did not help the plant, the *instruktory* of the *raikom* industrial department very seldom visited it, didn't help in anything and, as a result, the plant, which used to be a leading enterprise, now shows poor performance.

When the article appeared, Volodin telephoned *Moskovskaia pravda* with an angry protest but had to swallow the insult.

In reality, then, *Moskovskaia pravda* is the organ of the Moscow *gorkom*, which supervises its content through a chief editor who is a member of the *gorkom* and through a variety of other channels. In propitious circumstances, journalists and editors may initiate themes. Yet, in the experience of our respondents, political

<sup>14</sup> Asked whether the explanation might simply be that the size of the *gorkom* staff had grown since the 1960s, respondents answered that although the number of *departments* had indeed grown—and hence the total staff of the *gorkom*—the number of employees per department had not increased.

criticism or coverage of any major topic is carefully cleared by the *gorkom*. The *gorkom* uses *Moskovskaia pravda* "vertically," to punish or praise officials or institutions within its bailiwick. But we did not find indications of its use in political infighting or policy debate at higher levels. In particular, we could not find evidence of its use by Grishin (Moscow Party Secretary and a Politburo member) as a media instrument in intra-leadership conflict—a theme we shall return to in Section IV.

## INTERACTION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND EDITORIAL PROCESS: THE CASE OF LITERATURNNAIA GAZETA<sup>15</sup>

*Literaturnaia gazeta*, the main organ of the Writers' Union, has a quite different character from that of *Moskovskaia pravda* and a more complicated relationship with the political apparatus. *Literaturnaia gazeta* began to appear in its present form in 1967, as a weekly with an unusual format and colorful layout. What makes it unusual is not its generally pedestrian coverage of literature and the arts, but its so-called "second section" devoted to satire, social commentary, sociology, popular science, economic issues, and international affairs. A new and talented editorial staff was assembled in the years after 1967 to publish *Literaturnaia gazeta*; former staff members reported that in those early years the atmosphere in the editorial offices was enthusiastic and highly informal. Illustrative of the paper's innovative approach was a series of "experiments" aimed at exposing shortages in essential public services. Once *Literaturnaia gazeta* became known as a daring newspaper that reached a wide audience, ideas and would-be authors poured in from outside. The international coverage in the "second section" is often shrilly propagandistic, but its domestic coverage has included sensitive topics of the kind usually broached, if at all, only in limited-circulation specialized journals.

The new *Literaturnaia gazeta* was clearly licensed by the Party leadership. The paper's importance as the main organ of the Writers' Union, the suddenness of its transformation, and the boldness of its new coverage meant that it could have appeared only with the express approval of the Politburo and the close supervision of the Central Committee apparatus. Launched in the years of retreat from the gains won by cultural liberals under Khrushchev but while establishment liberals were still wooed rather than repressed, *Literaturnaia gazeta* can perhaps best be interpreted as an official safety valve provided to the liberal establishment intelligentsia. A Brezhnev aide termed the paper "a sort of socialist Hyde Park," i.e., a forum for airing a wide range of establishment opinions without committing the leadership. We lack evidence of *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s impact on policy discussions, but it clearly has sometimes served as a forum for raising and debating new issues on which the leadership has not yet taken a stand.

Supporting the interpretation that *Literaturnaia gazeta* was licensed as a kind of official safety valve is the fact that *Literaturnaia gazeta* has been run since 1967 by a team of editors whose links with the political and media control apparatus were closer than those of other editorial teams. The chief editor, Aleksandr Chakovskii, had run the paper in its previous version since 1962; he oversaw, evidently planned, and perhaps suggested the transformation of a conventional cultural paper into what

<sup>15</sup> This subsection summarizes some of the material presented in Appendix D.



may have been the most interesting and innovative experiment in Soviet journalism. The archetype of the experienced and sophisticated literary manager, Chakovskii has held important positions at major literary journals since the mid-1930s. As chief editor of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, he apparently established personal ties with Brezhnev, although there is no indication of any previous association. The first deputy editor until 1980, Vitalii Syrokonskii, came to *Literaturnaia gazeta* from service first in the Moscow Party *gorkom* and then as chief editor of its evening paper, *Vecherniaia Moskva*. Another deputy editor had formerly served as a Central Committee Propaganda Department *instruktor*; another had reportedly been a high-ranking military censor.

These seasoned editors oversaw a highly structured process of planning the newspaper's coverage. A discussion series might continue for a year, but respondents involved in the process reported that contributions were planned in advance, participants identified, and the necessary visas obtained from any state agency affected. Hence the appearance of spontaneity in many of these debates (later articles often seemed to come from the readership in response to earlier ones) was often illusory. Major discussion series were probably usually cleared in advance in the Central Committee apparatus, although our respondents could not offer conclusive testimony on this point, since such matters were usually the responsibility of the chief editor or his deputies, and the staff was frequently unsure whether a given decision announced by Chakovskii had or had not been explicitly approved in advance by the Central Committee Propaganda or Cultural Department. We assume high-level inspiration for evidently highly instrumental items that appear in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, for example, the dispatching of a photographer to the Ussuri River in 1969 to show that the area had returned to normal after the Sino-Soviet border clash. Since the top editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* are in practice the representatives of the Central Committee and the chief censors, without their own testimony it is hard to pinpoint exactly where initiatives and constraints come from. The origin of one *Literaturnaia gazeta* feature is clear, however: Beginning in 1968, *Literaturnaia gazeta* began to publish anti-Solzhenitsyn material written not by the staff but in the Central Committee or the KGB.

In other cases, the initiative for controversial material clearly came from below, as with an intended series on ex-convicts and recidivism, which had prepublication support from the MVD but was killed after the first article appeared because of criticism by the Central Committee Administrative Organs Department. *Literaturnaia gazeta* was involved in numerous controversies over economic, agricultural, environmental, and cultural affairs in its early years, but we were unable to clarify the sources of and constraints on its initiatives on these topics.

In brief, we can paint no simple picture of the relations between *Literaturnaia gazeta* and the political authorities. At times, the top editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* have acted as the direct representatives of the Party leadership, implementing the directives or anticipating the reactions of the Central Committee apparatus. At other times, they become embroiled in conflicting institutional or bureaucratic interests in a manner unthinkable for an organ of a Party body, such as *Moskovskaia pravda*. And at still other times, they have played the role of *enfants terribles* of the establishment intelligentsia, supporting bold staff members and testing the limits of critical publication.

## CONCLUSION

Our respondents consistently stressed that Soviet media in the 1970s were very different from those of the 1960s. In contrast to the relative liberality tolerated in the earlier decade, the policy applied under Brezhnev discouraged experiment and innovation and imposed a more authoritarian style on Soviet editorial offices. The result has been grayer journalism and a decline in reader interest, but (from the viewpoint of the Party leaders) a safer and more reliable press.

The earlier political environment clearly favored a different personality type, both among journalists and among chief editors. The archetype of the "Khrushchevian" editor was his son-in-law Adzhubei, chief editor first of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and then of *Izvestiia*. Adzhubei was remembered by many of our respondents as the best chief editor they had ever known, both for his inventiveness and for his ability to create innovative journalistic teams wherever he worked. He evidently did not see himself as the mere instrument of the Central Committee, and although his personal circumstances were obviously exceptional, there were other chief editors like him: Subbotin at *Trud*, Strepukhov at *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, Chakovskii's deputy Syrokonskii at *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and of course Aleksandr Tvardovskii at *Novyi mir*.<sup>16</sup> In those days, as our respondents recall it, the editorial process often became a game of getting "sharp" material through the Propaganda Department, and some chief editors connived with their staffs.

If Adzhubei was the archetype of the 1960s, Alekseev and Spiridonov exemplify the 1970s. Their authoritarian manner toward subordinates and their obsequiousness in all dealings with the Central Committee struck our respondents as characteristic of the late Brezhnev period. Yet many Soviet editors have been able to function in both environments. While Brezhnev's consolidation of power involved a number of ousters of media personnel at the turn of the 1970s,<sup>17</sup> there was no massive purge. A man such as Syrokonskii, who was praised for implementing the innovative new formula used by *Literaturnaia gazeta*, is still at the same post, implementing the more cynical formula of the same newspaper in the 1970s.

Many chief editors appear to have advanced in their careers without a powerful patron. But as we have seen, there are important exceptions, such as Alekseev, who was originally promoted by Polianov, and Subbotin, who rose with Shelepin. Whether such editors propagate the partisan views of their patrons is a question we shall explore in the next section. Both Alekseev and Subbotin survived the fall of their patrons, suggesting that in the Brezhnev era, patronage has been less important than was earlier the case.

It would appear that Soviet chief editors are, above all, adaptable political animals, who are capable of applying whatever mix of journalistic objectives the Central Committee calls for. Whatever the chief editor's personal mark on his paper, he functions as the linchpin in a system of close ties between the apparatus of the Central Committee (or its lower-level counterparts), on the one hand, and the editors

<sup>16</sup> Although we interviewed a number of *Novyi mir* collaborators in the course of the project, we did not attempt to analyze that journal's role as the leading media forum for the expression of establishment dissent in the Khrushchev era and immediately thereafter. The case of *Novyi mir* and the important role of Tvardovskii are thoroughly examined in Dina R. Spechler, *Permitted Dissent in the USSR: Novyi Mir and the Soviet Regime*, New York, Praeger Special Studies, 1982, and in Frankel. Both studies are based in part on interviews with former editors and authors of *Novyi mir*.

<sup>17</sup> See Hahn, pp. 252-269.

and staff, on the other hand. There is initiative from below in Soviet newsrooms, but only so far as it is judged either useful or unimportant by the leadership and Party apparatus. And it is the Party apparatus that counts—*Literaturnaia gazeta* is in no sense the “organ” of the Writers’ Union in the sense that *Moskovskaia pravda* is the organ of the Moscow *gorkom*.

Chief editors are not immune to the journalistic values of their staff; and if the political atmosphere is right, as it was in the Khrushchev period, they are capable of responding to their staff’s interest in new ideas and new approaches, provided they are certain the Propaganda Department and the political leadership will not lash out. In exceptional instances, a chief editor will put the stamp of his personality on his newspaper. But the times must be right; he must have a window of political opportunity. For the last ten or fifteen years, that window has been largely closed.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS, DEBATES, AND CONTROVERSIES IN SOVIET MEDIA

The nature of Soviet media debate (a term we use to encompass "discussion," "debate," and "controversy," following a typology developed in our study of Polish media<sup>1</sup>) depends on the cohesiveness of the political elite; the stage of decisionmaking involved (a debate in the media has varied meanings depending on whether it occurs at the policy-formulation stage or in the implementation/mobilization phase); the sensitivity or importance of an issue or policy area at any one time (for example, the nature-vs.-nurture controversy in biology, once highly sensitive because of its connections to ideology and genetics, can now be discussed freely in the popular-science press); and the source of initiative (whether top-down or bottom-up).

These considerations suggest a number of possible categories of media debate, which we were able to illustrate and partly validate in the Polish case by drawing on the first-hand testimony of our Polish respondents. The same categories of media debate can be defined hypothetically in the Soviet context as follows:

- *Factional debate* occurs when top leaders, while formally respecting the norms of Party unity, utilize partisan esoteric communication in the media to promote their own political positions and downgrade the standing of rivals. An example is described in Rush's analysis of the rise of Khrushchev.<sup>2</sup> If the communication does not publicly involve top leaders themselves, it is "surrogate" or "proxy" debate, perhaps with an ideological or policy issue masking a struggle for power among contending leadership factions. At one extreme, "factions" may be individual leaders jockeying for power. Ploss's analysis of differences between *Planovoe khoziaistvo* and *Lektsii po istorii KPSS*,<sup>3</sup> summarized in Appendix B, illustrates this category. At another extreme, the category might include cases in which a certain Party faction is actually trying to gain control of the media to use them as an instrument in the struggle for power; such was the case with the Moczarites in Poland in the late 1960s.<sup>4</sup>
- *Elite-related policy debate* occurs when a policy issue under consideration is contentious within a segment of the elite broader than the top leadership and is reflected in the media. An example is the Soviet debate on agriculture policy analyzed in Hahn.<sup>5</sup> Such debate may occur over a proposed measure or draft law, causing it to be adopted, amended, or even rejected. Elite-related policy debate, at least in principle, can either be orchestrated from above or initiated from below, or may result from some combination of both.

<sup>1</sup> Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Rush.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney I. Ploss, "Soviet Politics on the Eve of the 24th Party Congress," *World Politics*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> See Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Case Studies of Controversy*, Section II.

<sup>5</sup> Hahn.

- *Leadership-sanctioned specialist debates* occur when the leadership welcomes public discussion of a policy-relevant issue that is not contentious within the elite and on which the leadership seeks policy suggestions and sees utility in (or no harm done by) a genuine confrontation of views among specialists. For an example, see Solomon's well-documented study of discussions among Soviet criminologists.<sup>6</sup>
- *Lobbying* as a category of media debate occurs when an institution or organization, such as a ministry, uses the media to advocate an institutional interest, promote an institutional image, or criticize another institution. Such debate may concern seemingly narrow technical questions and may not even be perceived as a "debate" per se by anyone involved.
- *Leadership-initiated campaigns* and *leadership-orchestrated pseudo-discussions* occur when the leadership seeks to implement a policy or mobilize support for a decision or practice. A "campaign" can consist of one or more directed rebukes to a lower-level institution.

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR RESPONDENTS

The former Soviet media personnel and experts we interviewed minimized the significance of much Soviet media debate and downplayed the esoteric element in the debates that they described. Much of what the Western Sovietologist considers to be political and significant, the former Soviet journalist or researcher dismisses as "technical" and not worthy of interest. For example, a former Soviet economist/researcher dismissed debates over the treatment of interest rates as "not an important question." What would have been important, in his eyes, would have been a discussion over what new ministries to create or abolish, or whether to use profit as a performance indicator. But on such issues there is no "controversy"; articles about these issues appear only after the basic official decisions have been made. As another example of the difference in perspective between Western observers and our respondents, the flurry of discussion that took place within the Soviet media over Khrushchev's plans to promote a vocation-oriented reform in education (analyzed by Stewart,<sup>7</sup> as summarized in Appendix B) was waved aside by a respondent as "a second-order question." Another respondent called the press debate over Lake Baikal "academic." A former economic planner who contributed articles to Soviet publications labeled specialist debates a "pretense at activity" without practical meaning:

Soviet scientific and technical journals, as a rule, do not get read [by policymakers] at all, or get glanced through "on the diagonal," with readers picking out the occasional serious piece of work that may have happened to get through. Naturally, an article about "optimal directions" no one will read at all, except somebody who is working on a dissertation and uses it for a footnote. People publish in the majority of journals not to communicate an item of information, but to add a credit to their bibliographies.

. . .

<sup>6</sup> Solomon.

<sup>7</sup> Phillip D. Stewart, "Soviet Interest Groups and the Policy Process: The Repeal of Production Education," *World Politics*, Vol. 22, October 1969, pp. 29-50.

Would the leaders of [certain] industries, say, the minister or the deputy or the department chiefs, read such articles? Yes, they might. But, more likely, that material they have already seen in the form of "special material," on restricted distribution lists, on a "closed" basis, or in the form of special summaries. Overall this is one of those activities that give the appearance that something is going on: articles get published, debates get started, and so forth, but in practice there is nothing there, it is empty chatter (*pustoporozhnaia boltovnia*), a pouring from one empty vessel into another (*perelivanie iz pustovo v porozhnee*).

Who writes articles in the Soviet press, who reads them, and for what purpose? The Western analyst working with the Soviet press is generally using a set of assumptions something like the following: (1) The author of a Soviet newspaper or journal article is writing because he has a point to make (as we shall see, this is less of a self-evident statement than might appear); (2) what he writes is often the result of his own initiative or that of his organization, not simply a command from above; (3) what he writes is read by a public of attentive peers (i.e., more than just the mass public or the professional media apparatus); and (4) if subsequent articles appear on the same subject, by different authors in different media, the similarities or differences among them are more than happenstance. In sum, the Western analyst believes that some of what he reads in the Soviet media, however controlled or veiled, is intended to be meaningful communication and sometimes an exchange.

These assumptions, which are basic to the Western use of the Soviet media, were not necessarily shared by our émigré respondents. Most respondents would argue that while the Western assumptions may hold true in particular cases, often the following is true: (1) The "author" of an article may have a variety of motives for wishing to appear in print, of which communication of the substance of the article is only one. He may simply be promoting himself; he may be signing his name to a page of ghost-written boilerplate for the sake of the fee involved; or he may be gaining the publication credits he needs for his *kandidat* or *doktor* degree. In other words, there may be no message intended at all. (2) More often than not, writings appear in response to solicitation, whether from the newspaper staff (whose editors are instructed by the Central Committee on the amount of coverage they must give to this or that topic), or as part of an orchestrated media campaign, designed to promote mass support for a new policy initiative that has already been decided at the top. (3) The writer's professional peers do not read attentively the mass media or the public journals to follow issues of interest to them, since the knowledge available to insiders from direct contacts, closed meetings, or internal bulletins or memoranda is always much greater than what may be found in the open media. Consequently, the official or expert who wishes to reach his audience of peers will not choose the public media to do so. (4) If no attentive professional public is following the open media for developments in their field, then there will be no significant responses, rejoinders, rebuttals, or refutations either (except the ritual *samokritika* required of those whom the article may have criticized by name). In other words, there is often no communication or controversy as Western observers understand those terms.

Our respondents also took issue with Western analysts' working assumptions about the language in which media debate is expressed. On most domestic policy questions in technical or specialized fields, debates are not veiled in Aesopian lan-

guage. Times have changed, and for most ordinary technical questions it is no longer necessary to resort to such language, nor do readers watch for it. Moreover, the basis for a code is lacking, because technical questions are discussed in technical, not ideological language; hence it is not possible to extract a hidden message from minute variations on a frozen common language that everyone understands.<sup>8</sup>

Given this perspective, our respondents were able to help illuminate and refine, through first-hand experience, some of the categories of media debate postulated above. We will review and evaluate their testimony in the following subsections.<sup>9</sup>

### LEADERSHIP-DIRECTED CAMPAIGNS AND ORCHESTRATED PSEUDO-CONTROVERSY

Western analysts of Soviet affairs are well aware that a great deal of what appears to be diversity and public debate in the Soviet press is, of course, deliberately engineered from above. Letters to the editor as they appear in the Soviet press, for example, are usually solicited in support of a carefully orchestrated public campaign, designed to create the appearance of a ground swell of public support for some measure or another. The same is true of a series of articles on an undesirable phenomenon, for example, a campaign in *Moskovskaia pravda* against illegal distilleries in Moscow, initiated at the direction of the *gorkom*. For some of our respondents, that is the end of the matter: If a debate breaks out between two Soviet media organs on the doctrine of nuclear weapons or the nature of "peaceful coexistence," it can only be because a decision has been made in the Central Committee to create such a debate. Two of our respondents interpreted the explicit controversy between *Izvestiia* commentator Aleksander Bovin and Colonel E. Rybkin, a frequent contributor to the military-political press, as such an orchestrated pseudo-controversy.<sup>10</sup>

In the view of other respondents, matters are somewhat more complicated: Central directives on coverage notwithstanding, each journal or newspaper has a certain latitude to take a position that reflects the public it is addressed to or the official function it serves. The clearest illustration is *Literaturnaia gazeta*, which (as discussed in Appendix D) was expressly designed to appeal to an intellectual readership that would not respond to more primitive forms of journalism. In such cases, different media do diverge from one another in the details of their coverage, but the Central Committee remains unconcerned, so long as the diversity remains within accepted bounds, because it was planned that way. Thus one former editor recounted a conversation he had with a staff member of the Central Committee on

<sup>8</sup> It is true that every policy field tends to have its "frozen" expressions too: For example, articles on oil and gas will tend to quote whatever Brezhnev may have said about oil and gas at the most recent Party Congress. However, such fixed phrases do not have the same binding force as official ideological phrasings do, and individual writers may depart from them without necessarily intending to signal anything significant to their readers.

<sup>9</sup> Case studies of some of the episodes described below could be developed.

<sup>10</sup> Rybkin's article in *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (#20, October 1973, p. 26) reproached Bovin by name for committing a "methodological error" in ignoring Clausewitz's dictum that war is an extension of politics. In the September 11, 1973, issue of *Izvestiia*, Bovin had termed nuclear war suicidal, and he restated this view in the April 1974 issue of *Molodoi Kommunist*.

the celebrated rivalry between *Novyi mir* and *Oktiabr'*: As long as it remained within bounds, the staff member said, the rivalry was not the Central Committee's concern.

Why is such diversity built into the media? It is clearly not done to increase circulation. Respondents repeatedly told us that the Central Committee (or the local Party committees, in the case of city or province media) is indifferent to circulation statistics, and that officials of the Propaganda Department are not noted for their imagination or breadth of view. Yet, respondents commented, Soviet media are supposed to be interesting and critical, for otherwise they cannot be effective in performing their purpose of shaping public attitudes. Consequently, there is a built-in tension in the management of the media. But what many respondents rejected is the notion that this tension regularly provides an opening for politically significant initiative from below, for education of the elite by the media, or for meaningful mirroring of contending viewpoints in society.

One respondent described the way a newspaper like *Komsomol'skaia pravda* is enlisted in the effort to "initiate" a wave of public opinion in favor of a certain policy, to which the Central Committee will then "respond" with an official decree:

How is a major Central Committee decree prepared? Let's say the subject is an increase in production of fish. An order goes out to our local *Komsomol'skaia pravda* correspondents to organize a letter writing campaign. The order comes from our editors, of course, but its origin is the Central Committee. Did you really think that workers write letters on their own? Well, sure they do, but they're usually complaint letters, small stuff, not on policy questions. But a so-called "letter campaign" is organized by our own correspondents. One of them goes, say, to a fishing collective and looks up the secretary of the local Party or *Komsomol* committee. He tells the secretary what kind of letter he needs. "Fine," the secretary says. "We'll take care of it. We'll call in X and Y. They're good Communists." In come X and Y and the correspondent explains to them what the campaign is about. "Will you write a letter?" "Sure," say X and Y, "but we're not so good at writing letters." "That doesn't matter," says the correspondent, "we'll write it for you. All you have to do is sign and send it in." And so a few days later a letter signed Ivanov arrives at the paper's editorial offices. So that's how the campaign begins: "public opinion" comes in from a dozen collective farms. Then an article appears, written as if in answer to the letters. And then an official decree. But it's all organized from above. And when we read other newspapers and see a series of letters with a single subject, we know that some sort of official pronouncement is being prepared.

Yet even the most cynical ex-journalist acknowledges that within this highly controlled environment there is some room for genuine initiative from below. The respondent just quoted, for example, was full of praise for one of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*'s best correspondents, Vasilii Peskov, whose name is associated with a great deal of imaginative reporting. Peskov was one of the first to write about the threat to Lake Baikal in the 1960s; and later he became well known as the co-author of a remarkable travelogue about the United States, serialized in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in the spring of 1973, which gave accurate and lively details about American life that the average Soviet reader had never seen in the media. But Peskov had equally talented colleagues at *Komsomol'skaia pravda* in those days, among them feuilleton writer Il'ia Shatunovskii (now at *Pravda*) and Iaroslav Golovanov (now a successful popular writer whose books include interesting



coverage of American science).<sup>11</sup> These are names that caused *Komsomol'skaia pravda* to be known in the 1960s and early 1970s as a breeding ground for talent.

Still another figure frequently mentioned as showing journalist initiative is Anatolii Agranovskii, a staff writer for *Izvestiia*, whose stories are carefully crafted essays about seemingly innocuous subjects, which conceal social criticism that is widely shared among Moscow intellectuals. He wrote a series of articles in 1967 defending *kolkhoz* sideline industries as a salutary means to increase *kolkhoz* income, supply needed products, and reduce seasonal unemployment. The series criticized improprieties in the conduct of a provincial court trial of several *kolkhoz* farmers who had set up a lucrative electrical switch business. Soon thereafter, a government decree legitimized such sideline businesses. In late 1968, Politizdat published these Agranovskii articles in book form. In March 1969, *Leninskoe znamia*, the Moscow *oblast* paper, revived the controversy over the trial, portrayed the farmers as promoters of private enterprise, and in a bitter ad hominem broadside accused Agranovskii of "unrestrained preaching of mercantilism." *Izvestiia* replied with an editorial article defending Agranovskii against the *Leninskoe znamia* charges and hailing the government decree as the proper solution of the larger political-economic issue at stake.<sup>12</sup>

Another reported case of initiative from below that resulted in media controversy occurred when *Znania-sila*, the popular science magazine, praised the design of the Zaporozhets automobile in 1960. *Za rulem*, an automobilist journal, took strong issue with *Znania-sila*; the upshot was the replacement of the *Za rulem* editor. A respondent with first-hand knowledge described this as a polemic conducted entirely from below, at the initiative of journalists. But another respondent from the Ukraine claimed that Ukrainian Party chief Shelest had involved himself, complaining to the Central Committee about *Za rulem*'s criticism of an automobile produced in Dnepropetrovsk, in the Ukraine. Shelest's position was that complaints should have been addressed to the republic's Central Committee, not aired in the open press.

A final case of media initiative from below was L. Kardin's 1965 article in *Novyi mir*, still at that time a relatively bold journal under chief editor Tvardovskii, questioning the standard accounts of Bolshevik heroics, including those of the cruiser Aurora and the Panfilov regiment. Kardin was criticized by a group of military officers, including Marshal Rokossovskii, in *Krasnaia zvezda*. But the Central Committee moved to end the discussion, which concerned one of the founding myths of the system, when, a respondent reported, a rebuttal by *Novyi mir* was killed by the authorities.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ia. Golovanov, "Nauka v SShA," in *Puti zemnye i kosmicheskie*, Moscow, Biblioteka komsomol'skoi pravdy, No. 6, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Leninskoe znamia*, March 29, 1969, *Izvestiia*, April 12, 1969, as reviewed in FBIS, *Survey of Communist Propaganda*, April 24, 1969, pp. 21-24. Respondents repeatedly mentioned Agranovskii as an example of healthy journalistic initiative that boldly addressed contentious issues, especially in the still relatively loose immediate post-Khrushchev period. Yet the explicit polemics in this particular case raise the possibility that Agranovskii may have articulated one set of views in an intra-elite policy dispute. Two respondents claimed that Agranovskii had high-level political connections.

<sup>13</sup> In his essay "Legendy i fakty," Kardin argued that historical evidence does not support official claims that the cruiser Aurora fired the opening salvo of the 1917 revolution, or that 28 men of the Panfilov regiment gave their lives to stop a German attack on Moscow in 1941. After the *Krasnaia zvezda* article denounced the journal as well as the author, *Novyi mir* was prepared to buttress Kardin's thesis with additional facts but was stopped by the censors, according to one respondent.

Such cases indicate the possibility, under certain conditions, of journalist-initiated discussions in the Soviet media analogous to (albeit with reduced scope) journalist-initiated discussions in Polish media.<sup>14</sup>

Yet one of the reasons why the talented reporters and writers who took the initiative were successful was that they had good noses, not only for a good story, but for the right time to tell it. Peskov's series on the United States, for example, came at the height of détente with the United States. Indeed, the fact that he was sent to the United States at all should be considered unusual, since domestic and international journalists almost always constitute two separate career lines which rarely mix. Such reporters' scope for initiative comes from their ability to exploit safe openings and do it well.

Respondents who described the Soviet journalist's scope for initiative mentioned a number of rules and practices. First, a certain amount of initiative is built into media work simply by virtue of the fact that media department heads must formulate proposals for their annual and three-month plans, specifying what kinds of stories they intend to write themselves or solicit from contributors from various institutions. In these plans, the journalists are supposed to be "critical" and "sharp," in the tradition of Soviet journalistic populism, which dotes on exposés of local abuses. One department head on a Moscow newspaper said that a routine part of his job was to sit down with his staff and think up lists of "issues" for the newspaper to raise.

Second, the cardinal rule of journalistic initiative is "don't generalize," but limit an article to a specific case. A third important rule is that the "higher" the newspaper or its station, the more liberties it can take in initiating coverage of controversial topics. Our respondents were quite emphatic on this point: The local press has very little latitude; the all-Union press has a great deal more.

Salaries and perquisites are higher in the central media than in the local ones. Consequently, the best journalists soon move on to Moscow, and within Moscow to the major newspapers, such as *Pravda*. This fact alone would tend to produce a higher standard in the central press, and perhaps a great degree of initiative. The greater relative latitude of the central press is consistent with a striking feature of Soviet society generally: Latitude is a function of one's rank in society. As one gains in seniority and official merit, one also acquires a limited freedom to criticize. For the central press to have greater latitude than the local organs is precisely what one would expect under such a scheme. But even a seasoned journalist can misjudge the limits.

## INFRINGING ON THE PRIVILEGES OF THE POWERFUL

Two sorts of controversy appear to interest Soviet journalists particularly: those involving stories that infringe on the privileges of powerful people, and those that challenge the prerogatives of powerful institutions. These cases are fascinating to a wide circle of émigrés, and the most famous stories become stock items of the Moscow rumor mill, judging from the fact that several of these stories recurred

<sup>14</sup> See Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*.

repeatedly in our interviews. The following are two examples relating to personal privilege.

In mid-1965, the chief editor of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Voronov, was removed from his post after the newspaper printed an exposé of conditions aboard a Soviet whaling flotilla. The commander of the flotilla, a latterday Captain Bligh named Salanik, exposed his men to inhumane living conditions, causing several of them to die. The story was full of piquant detail, such as the fact that Salanik had built a swimming pool on board for his nineteen-year-old wife. So far nothing out of the ordinary—except that the unlucky editor had not reckoned with the fact that the whaling captain, a Hero of Socialist Labor and a member of the Ukrainian Central Committee, was well-connected politically through long-standing personal friendships that reached as high, so our respondents claimed, as Suslov himself. Voronov first found himself demoted to an editor's desk at *Pravda* but Suslov's wrath pursued him (according to our respondents), and he soon became a correspondent in East Germany. But there was more: Voronov's staff believed that the entire inspiration for the exposé had come from Salanik's associates, who were miffed at not receiving their fair share of the foreign contraband in which he was prominently involved. But Salanik's connections proved better than theirs.

A similar episode, which we heard in several variants, involved the satirical weekly *Krokodil*, which had the bad fortune to criticize a Ukrainian collective farm chairman who turned out to be a distant associate of Shelest, then First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party. The managing editor of *Krokodil*, Vladimir Nadein, was fired over this affair, despite the efforts of his chief editor, Emanuel Semenov, to save him. Nadein's fortunes apparently recovered after Shelest's fall, for he soon moved to *Izvestiia*.<sup>15</sup>

Such episodes may have remained in our respondents' minds because they involve the Soviet journalist's worst professional fear: Despite all the caution and "feel" (*chut'e*) developed over a long career of double-checking with authority and sniffing out all possible sources of trouble from higher up, even the most seasoned professionals can stumble over a hidden political tripwire, and the fact that the error is unintentional will not save them. There are indeed cases of "stumbling" over personal connections by journalists who were attempting to fulfill a mobilization role of the media—exposing petty wrongs.

Even the most prominent author will be reprimanded sharply if he lifts the veil of discretion that is drawn before the activities of the mighty. Normally, public discussion of the private activities of influential people in their dachas and preserves is so taboo that the facts cannot even be hinted at, let alone the names. For example, the newspaper *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia* got into trouble by publishing (on August 13, 1972) an account of sturgeon poaching in the Azovo-Sevashskoe preserve, which turned out (although the article did not say so directly)

<sup>15</sup> We heard three different versions of the story, all involving a *kolkhoz* chairman and *Krokodil*, although the details are so different that it is hard to decide whether they are garbled versions of the same episode or simply that *Krokodil* has had bad luck with well-connected rural Ukrainians. One telling has it that Semenov himself was fired, the author was a certain Moravlevich, the place was Krasnodar, and the political connection ran through Dnepropetrovsk First Secretary Medonov to Brezhnev himself. Still another episode has *Krokodil* attacking Polta *oblast* first secretary Muzhetskii, for which several staff members were fired. We can verify *Krokodil's* criticism of the *kolkhoz* chairman in March 1970; Muzhetskii's defense of him in the September 1970 issue; condemnation of the original criticism by the Ukrainian Central Committee and an editorial self-criticism, both published in the January 1971 issue; and Nadein's ouster. See FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, January 31, 1973.

to involve two young guards at a Politburo member's dacha, where they were tracked down by a game warden. Editors and censors in Moscow did not make the connection, but higher-ups did. The author of the story, a free-lancer, was told by the editors of the newspaper that he would not be invited again to contribute to it.

It is in cases of this kind that we see the hand of individual leaders reaching out to defend a personal friend or to slap down an offending journalist who may have come too close to revealing that top leaders have seaside palaces or that they go on bear hunts. This kind of direct intervention is apparently accepted as part of the rules of the game, whereas (to preview the discussion below) direct intervention over a matter of policy is today considered rare and reprehensible. Policy is the prerogative of the top leader or the collective leader, whose decisions are transmitted through orderly channels; but in the game of defending the rulers' prerogatives, any leader can play.

### STEPPING ON INSTITUTIONAL TOES

Health is a delicate subject in Soviet journalism because it seems to lie on the boundary line between what is forbidden and what is permitted: On the one hand, it is a subject of major concern to the population and one in which there is a great deal to criticize; at the same time, it is not one of the sacrosanct political foundations of the regime in the same sense as the military or the police. Therefore, it can be treated—but in a gingerly way, first, because the country cannot be made to seem unhealthy, and second, because the Ministry of Health is touchy about its reputation and strives to defend it.

At one time, *Literaturnaia gazeta* decided to run a critical article on abuses in experiments being conducted on laboratory animals in certain technical institutes. After careful reflection, the newspaper printed the article—but deputy editor Syrokomskii, for fear of provoking an angry reaction from Health Minister Petrovskii, deleted a photograph showing the sad face of a dog on the surgical table.

Another sensitive case involved a Siberian bone specialist whose outstanding results *Literaturnaia gazeta* wished to publicize. But the Moscow medical establishment was skeptical and opposed the publication of the articles. However, the Siberian doctor had developed an influential following, as his reputation spread throughout the Soviet Union by word of mouth. He had treated Soviet Olympic high-jumper Valerii Brumel' and composer Dmitrii Shostakovich, who reportedly added their support to *Literaturnaia gazeta's* proposed campaign. Finally, *Literaturnaia gazeta's* deputy editor Syrokomskii was able to negotiate approval from the Central Committee's Science and Education Department, and the articles appeared.

Finally, Viktor Perel'man, in his memoirs of his days on the staff of *Literaturnaia gazeta*,<sup>16</sup> recounts that he arranged a roundtable discussion of the qualifications and professional attitudes of medical doctors. The discussion was written up and submitted for publication but was killed as being "too slanderous" by Chakovskii, who then reprimanded the editorial board member in charge for not keeping tight enough control and for allowing the roundtable to take place at all. (See

<sup>16</sup> Viktor Perel'man, *Pokinutaia Rossiia*, Vol. 2, Tel-Aviv, Vremia i my, 1977, pp. 160-161.

Appendix D.) What is striking about these episodes is that they do not involve actual official intervention by the Ministry of Health, only concern that the Ministry *might* intervene, or behind-the-scenes reservations. In other words, the system of self-censorship that is applied within the media themselves is by far the most powerful force in limiting their coverage.

We begin to appreciate the difficulties of Soviet editors when we look at a sampling of articles rejected or criticized because they happened to ruffle some institutional *amour-propre*: A local newspaper is criticized by the Ministry of Culture and the Party City Committee for having printed a critical review of a production by the Moscow Art Theater (a special sacred cow of the Moscow theatrical establishment); a local Komsomol secretary is able to kill an article in the Moscow Komsomol newspaper because it is mildly critical of living conditions in the merchant marine units sailing out of a port in that secretary's jurisdiction; a *Komsomol'skaia pravda* feuilleton about a swindle in Aeroflot is killed to avoid trouble with the Ministry of Civil Aviation; a feuilleton in *Moskovskaia pravda* about abuses of power in a suburban comrades' court draws fire when the officials involved complain to the Party City Committee; *Literaturnaia gazeta* is told by the Propaganda Department to stop a series on flaws in the system for awarding higher education degrees following a flood of readers' letters unfavorable to the USSR Academy of Sciences and its president, M. Keldysh;<sup>17</sup> a *Fitil'* (movie short subject) episode showing textile clerks cheating customers is forbidden by the Propaganda Department after complaints from the Ministry of Light Industry. Reading down a list of such episodes, one can understand why chief editors spend so much of their time in attendance at the Central Committee or at the local apparatus of the Party, cultivating their own connections and making sure they make no mistakes.

In such circumstances, institutional interests are indeed at play, not in defense of specific policy positions, but rather in a touchy patrolling of the boundaries of their prerogatives—a kind of preemptive lobbying. However, institutional interests can also be involved more actively in media debate, as we shall see below.

## DEBATE AMONG SPECIALISTS AND INSTITUTIONS

Much Western analysis of Soviet domestic policies, particularly in areas such as energy, environment, urban policy, technological innovation, and criminal justice, is based on close readings of "debates" in the Soviet press, in which the different viewpoints of institutions or prominent personalities are expressed, sometimes quite frankly. That such discussions do take place, and that they mirror to some extent the evolution of actual policy, no Western analyst can seriously doubt, because so many cases have been observed. Indeed, it is remarkable that during the Brezhnev period, as freedom of expression in cultural matters has diminished, the frankness of many technical discussions in the Soviet press has increased. Our respondents confirm the existence of such technical discussions (although they are often inclined to downplay their political significance).

<sup>17</sup> Perel'man, p. 162.

What we wanted to learn from our respondents, in order to be able to decide the matter of political significance ourselves, was the "inside story" of such discussions. Our understanding of their significance as a "mirror" of Soviet policymaking is obviously much affected, depending on the answers to questions such as (1) Are we dealing with orchestrated debate, carefully arrayed in advance by the Central Committee, with the roles of different newspapers and writers assigned in advance? Or is the debate the result of initiative on the part of the media themselves, or spontaneous lobbying and campaigning by the institutions affected? (2) Are we dealing here with a real debate, in the sense that what is printed in the public media is communication intended for decisionmakers and other members of the elite, designed to shape their views and give them essential information? Or is the "debate" in the press simply a faint reflection of debate going on in inside circles, of which a distant image reaches the media almost as an afterthought? (3) Should we assume that discussions among specialists in the open media signal differences of opinion within the elite, or simply that the elite has no opinion for the time being and considers the issue to be safe enough, and unimportant enough, for the specialists to be allowed to air their technical views without restraint? In other words, is the outbreak of a public discussion in the Soviet press a signal that an issue is important, or precisely the opposite, that it is so trivial that it can be debated openly?

## INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY CONFLICT

It is in the area of domestic social and economic policy that Western scholars and analysts have traced the unfolding of sometimes wide-ranging media controversy and related it to institutional and policy conflict. Our respondents provided material on several relevant cases.<sup>18</sup>

One case in point is Soviet energy policy, which has been characterized by several abrupt shifts in strategy over the last ten years, each of them accompanied by major controversy reaching as high as the Politburo. At least, that is what Western analysts infer from reading the media. Using the standard tools of analysis, Western readers believe they have found strong evidence of basic disagreements between Brezhnev and Kosygin over basic energy strategy, rivalry between competing energy institutions, conflicting advice from technical experts, and arguments between central ministries and local Party authorities. Are these perceptions accurate? By what process, and for what purposes, have these echoes found their way into the open media?

One of our respondents, a specialist who contributed to publications on the subject of energy, gave the following picture: The appearance of a disagreement between Brezhnev and Kosygin over basic strategy in energy development was

<sup>18</sup> These and other episodes could be developed into full case studies, comparable to the Polish cases developed in Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Case Studies of Controversy*. We did preliminary work on one case, the controversy concerning mathematical economics in the early 1970s, referenced in Section II. Respondents also referred to (but we could not develop case illustrations of) various debates among specialists on sociology and law, which were apparently sanctioned as concerning subjects of low sensitivity and limited leadership concern. More sensitive specialist discussions are confined to limited-circulation journals; one respondent contributed articles on drug traffic and abuse to such a discussion.

real enough, although unrelated to any power struggle between them. Between 1977 and 1979, Brezhnev gave his support to a crash oil-first strategy, based on West Siberia. This stress can be seen in his speeches during that period. Kosygin's official pronouncements, in contrast, dwelt on coal and nuclear energy; and although he did not take issue with Brezhnev in so many words, his silence on the subject of oil is striking. But according to our respondent, the debate was not simply between the two leaders, but between two coalitions: Gosplan, the Academy of Sciences, and the professional staff of the Council of Ministers emphasizing coal and nuclear energy, on one side, and the major energy ministries and the local Party authorities in Siberia emphasizing oil, on the other. In the fall of 1977, Brezhnev dramatically threw his support to the latter; and the oil-first strategy prevailed for the next two years, at which time a more "balanced" strategy was developed, duly reflected in Brezhnev's speeches from that time on. Kosygin, meanwhile, stuck to his own phrasings until shortly before his death.<sup>19</sup>

For some time, there has been a related debate in the Soviet press over the proper way to develop the gas and oil fields of northern West Siberia. Because it is difficult to attract labor to these areas, and also because the areas will not be able to support permanent cities once the gas and oil are gone, the Soviets have resorted more and more to flying in temporary teams of workers from outside, housing them in temporary settlements, and flying them out again. In many respects this method is proving unsatisfactory, and local Party authorities, especially in the gas industry, have been conducting a lobbying campaign to get Moscow to change strategies and build large, permanent cities with stable populations. This campaign has been going on through the press for some years, although so far it has had only mixed success.<sup>20</sup> Our respondent confirmed that this question has been discussed within the regime since the late 1960s. The fact that open debate between Party authorities and industrial ministries has been allowed for several years seems remarkable; and the issue itself is not trivial, involving as it does the strategy for the Soviets' most important energy program, an operation scheduled to absorb over 10 billion rubles in the next five years. Yet our respondent did not seem to think the matter was especially unusual or significant, presumably because when the top leadership has not yet formulated a final official position, debate in the media can proceed fairly openly—a point made by other respondents as well. The debate also illustrates another point stressed by respondents: The lobbying of local Party authorities in the public media is presumably only the visible tip of a much larger campaign behind the scenes. The public lobbying is only an accompaniment; it is not the part that really counts.

Other episodes related by our respondents that involved bureaucratic interests are less easily related to a concrete policy issue. One group of cases involved cultural politics—a subject of wide-ranging media discussions in the 1960s and even

<sup>19</sup> For details on this aspect of Soviet energy policy, which brings the story up to date, see Thane Gustafson, "Soviet Energy Policy at the 26th Party Congress: From Big Coal to Big Gas," in Seweryn Bialer and Thane Gustafson (eds.), *The Soviet Union at the Crossroads*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1982.

<sup>20</sup> For examples, see K. Mironov (first secretary of the Iamalo-Nenetskii *okruzhkom*), "U istokov gazovykh rek," *Pravda*, April 17, 1981; V. Lisin (staff writer), "Urengoy," *Pravda*, October 15, 1981; A. Gramolin (staff writer), "Chas Urengoiia," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, May 7 and 9, 1981; and E. G. Altunin (secretary of the Tiumen' obkom with responsibility for gas development), "Strategiiu vybrat' segodnia," *Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva*, Vol. 2, 1979, pp. 12-22.

into the early 1970s. (An example involving the writer Shevtsov will be cited below.) In 1967, a *Komsomol'skaia pravda* article sharply criticized unnamed "bureaucrats" in the Ministry of Culture, then headed by Furtseva, for their arbitrary policy toward the theatre.<sup>21</sup> It is exceptional for a Soviet newspaper to criticize an all-Union ministry, and indirectly, its minister, and it may be speculated that the incident was related to controversy within the elite over cultural policy. In this case, the ministry fought back: The Komsomol Central Committee criticized the article, and a week later a *Komsomol'skaia pravda* editorial renounced the article as a "gross ideological error."<sup>22</sup> The authors of the article lost their jobs as *Pravda* staff members.<sup>23</sup>

We were told of a second episode involving Furtseva directly that occurred shortly before her fall from power. In 1973, *Literaturnaia gazeta's* chief editor Chakovskii, who has by all accounts one of the keenest political noses in Moscow, published a critical account of the condition of the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, blaming museum officials for poor conservation practices. The article reportedly angered Minister Furtseva, who wrote a rebuttal and demanded that *Literaturnaia gazeta* publish it. Chakovskii, knowing that Furtseva lacked support in the Central Committee and had shaky standing with the political leadership, decided to challenge her head-on. He ordered one of his department heads to write a reply to Furtseva's letter and took the galleys of both to a meeting with Furtseva at Central Committee headquarters. An hour later, he called his newspaper: "We won't print either one," he announced, "she withdrew hers." The case suggests that a minister who is losing favor, although untouchable personally to all but private high-level criticism, may be unable to prevent attacks on specific policies within his or her ministry.

Sometime after the death of the popular but often controversial film director Shukshin, we were told, a free-lance literary critic received a call from *Pravda's* literature and criticism department chief, Kapralov, who asked him to prepare within hours an article on Shukshin. The critic had written about the film director before, and Kapralov encouraged him to use the old material for expediency's sake. The article appeared within two days. A day later, *Pravda* printed a Central Committee resolution announcing that Shukshin had been awarded the Lenin prize. Arriving at *Pravda* offices to collect his honorarium, the puzzled author queried Kapralov as to why he had rushed so with the article. Kapralov replied, "It was thanks to both you and me that Shukshin posthumously received the Lenin Prize." According to Kapralov, the *Pravda* article had broken the stalemate in the prize committee, where "Russian" representatives, despite Shukshin's Russo-patriotic stance, reportedly had held out against those from the national republics who favored giving the prize to him. When the *Pravda* article appeared on the morning of

<sup>21</sup> F. Burlatskii and L. Karpinskii, "Na puti k prem'ere (On the Way to the Premiere)," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 30, 1967. L. Karpinskii was an influential figure in his own right, the son of a famous father and a member of the *Pravda* editorial board. Burlatskii held the post of "political observer" at *Pravda*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., July 8, 1967.

<sup>23</sup> According to one account, Burlatskii and Karpinskii initiated the article and originally submitted it to *Pravda* chief editor Zimianin. Zimianin discussed the article with Demichev, who rejected it, but Zimianin led the authors to believe he had rejected the article on his own. The authors then submitted the article to *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, whose chief editor, perhaps assuming the prestigious authors had backing from higher-ups, ran the story, for which he was subsequently reprimanded.



the last committee session, it was read by committee members as "*Pravda's* instructions to them" and they proceeded to vote for the award. Kapralov explained that the timing of the article was deliberate, and its effect on the committee was expected. A respondent noted that Kapralov had good contacts in the Central Committee and its apparat but allowed the possibility that the article may have been Kapralov's own initiative.

Another episode apparently involved differing institutional perspectives on sound cultural propaganda. A *Fitil'* short subject tied the popularity of a volunteer-built religious concert hall in a Lithuanian town to the lack of alternative recreational facilities. *Fitil'* had support from the Culture Ministry but had to bow to pressure from the Lithuanian authorities and the Propaganda Department, and the item was withdrawn.

Finally, in a case related to agricultural policy, the famous novelist Leonid Leonov once dared, in a coauthored article in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* calling for the preservation of nature and wildlife, to criticize Agriculture Minister Matskevich by name for hunting in a closed wildlife preserve.<sup>24</sup> This reportedly so incensed Brezhnev and Podgorny, themselves avid hunters, that Leonov was reprimanded. If this really happened, the broaching of an important leadership privilege would account for the reprimand. The criticism of Matskevich himself is not surprising, given the role of the Agricultural Ministry in media controversies of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was a clear case—which can be documented from the press, but which we were unable to develop further—of media debate related to contentious intra-elite reconsideration of agricultural policy. The so-called "link system" of agriculture was explicitly recommended to the Agricultural Ministry in a long series of media articles beginning with *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1967 and continued by *Pravda* in 1973. Yet even after *Pravda* had criticized the Ministry for dragging its heels, and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture had responded self-critically, the Ministry's journal *Economics of Agriculture* continued to oppose the concept. In the course of the extended debate on this and many other matters of agricultural policy, the Ministry was repeatedly criticized for corruption and malfeasance.<sup>25</sup>

## FACTIONAL DEBATES AND ESOTERIC COMMUNICATION

In Section II we sketched the role of the Politburo in the control of the media and noted the responsibility of the political leadership for overall media policy. Does this formally collective responsibility mean that individual top leaders can control their "own" media organs or otherwise propagate their own particular views in opposition to those of their colleagues? Our respondents reported that individual Politburo members occasionally directly or through aides express satisfaction or register misgivings to editors and authors about what has appeared in

<sup>24</sup> Leonid Leonov and Boris Riabinin, "Zapovednyi—znachit neprikosnovennyi (A Preserve Means Untouchable)," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, May 24, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, May 8, 1973, June 10, 1973, and August 15, 1973; *Ekonomika sel'skogo khoziaistva*, October 1974, as cited in FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, August 22, 1973, and November 20, 1974. See also Hahn, pp. 214-216. Not long before Matskevich's removal, *Pravda* published a biting satire on conditions in the Ministry, reporting that the Minister's top aide was taking bribes (A. Sukhontsev in *Pravda*, July 2, 1972, as cited in FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, August 23, 1972).

their publications. In some cases, career advancement of an individual (including one of our respondents) has been traced to such positive feedback. Some media figures have reportedly exploited their access to contrive top-level intervention and promote their fortunes. Such reported manipulation has ranged from persuading an aide to insert praise of the movie documentary feature *Fitil'* in a Brezhnev speech to cajoling acquaintances in the Central Committee into approving an otherwise doomed controversial article. Respondents singled out A. Chakovskii, the chief editor of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, as one who uses his access to secure approval for airing contentious issues in his newspaper. Do such overtures from below, as well as manipulation from above, foster partisan esoteric communication as an instrument of intra-leadership conflict?

### Assumptions of Esoteric Communication

Before considering respondent testimony on this issue, we will review the postulates of "esoteric communication" analysis. The central assumption of Kremlinology is that Politburo members who disagree with other leaders sometimes manipulate what appears in the media to communicate personal positions. Such conflict is generally assumed to be expressed in esoteric terms not transparent to those outside the elite. The basic reason for the existence of "esoteric communication," according to Rush, is that

... top leaders engaged in controversy are concerned with persuading their followers that their personal position in the top leadership is secure. Moreover, a top leader who seeks to increase his power at the expense of an antagonist may try to convince the antagonist's followers that his own power is rising. These considerations provide a major incentive for partisan communications from individual top leaders to sub-elites. Since partisan statements on contentious subjects cannot be made explicitly, they take the form of esoteric communications—texts whose deepest meanings can be grasped by only a part of their audience. This masking is usually achieved by subtle understatement, achieved by making small changes in the standard ideological phrases and formulas that the elite is familiar with.<sup>26</sup>

By "decoding" such esoteric communication, Rush traced the political rise, even as it was happening, of a man whom most Western observers would not initially have picked as the most most likely successor to Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev. And although no Kremlinologist predicted Khrushchev's fall in 1964, Carl Linden discerned challenges to Khrushchev's rule before his fall,<sup>27</sup> and Michael Tatu's historical reconstruction<sup>28</sup> of the events leading up to it shows (albeit retrospectively) that a reasonable case for such a prediction could have been made a year or two before it happened.

As Brezhnev consolidated his power as Party chief, there were fewer indications of possible partisan esoteric communication in the Soviet media, yet at times Western observers believed they observed such factional debate. An interview

<sup>26</sup> "The Role of Esoteric Communication in Soviet Politics," in Rush.

<sup>27</sup> See Carl A. Linden, *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership, 1957-1964*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966.

<sup>28</sup> Tatu, Michael, *Le Pouvoir en URSS*, Paris, Grasset, 1967; translated as *Power in the Kremlin*, London, Collins, 1969.

with Politburo member V. V. Shcherbitskii, published in *Pravda*, December 28, 1980, sparked interest in the West because it appeared to contain subtle complaints directed at Brezhnev. Shcherbitskii, the head of the Ukrainian Party organization, spoke of unnamed leaders who take an "uneven attitude toward subordinates," keeping some "close at hand," while "others he will seem to hold at a far distance." In words that could be interpreted as a swipe at Brezhnev's long-time aide Konstantin Chernenko, now considered to be one of the prime contenders for succession, Shcherbitskii warned that if the leader did not give all his subordinates access to him to raise important questions, he would end up being surrounded by a circle of obsequious people "who very skillfully find his weak points and use them for their own advantage." As a result, the leader's opinion of subordinates who are far away may become poisoned; he will label them "upstarts" and "quarrelsome," while in reality they are the "real enthusiasts," the ones who are "needed most of all."<sup>29</sup>

Another example appeared the year before in *Kommunist*, the semi-monthly of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>30</sup> An article on collective leadership, by an obscure author, contained phrases that could be interpreted as criticism of the cult of the individual leader and a defense of the principle of collective leadership. What particularly attracted Westerners' attention was its wording, which departed from the standard treatments of the subject in the 1970s (the practice had become to pay ritual tribute to the principle of collectivity, but to balance it with remarks about the dangers of having too much of it). The *Kommunist* article, however, used some wording that had not been seen since the late 1960s, when there was still some resistance to Brezhnev's domination of the Politburo.

Before discussing these two examples further, let us reconsider for a moment what the existence of esoteric communication logically requires. The notion of a *message* supposes a sender, a code, and an audience. The sender knows he is communicating a message; the audience knows it is being addressed; and the code is understood by both of them. In other words, the notion of deliberate communication implies that the Soviet media can contain, in addition to the overt text, a "latent" text that is addressed to a select group, those who have the necessary knowledge to understand the code and interpret it.

So far, this does not sound implausible, and such Aesopian communication was a stock feature of Soviet politics in earlier periods. But esoteric communication also logically requires that the sender's colleagues, though aware of what is going on, be unwilling or unable (or insufficiently concerned) to stop it completely;<sup>31</sup> and

<sup>29</sup> See FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, January 9, 1980, pp. 10-11.

<sup>30</sup> A. F. Vodolazskii, "A High Principle of Party Leadership," *Kommunist*, No. 12, June 1979. Contrasting interpretations are offered in FBIS, *Trends in Communist Media*, September 19, 1979, pp. 1-5, and in David Peck, "Kremlinologists and Collective Leadership," *Soviet Analyst*, December 20, 1979.

<sup>31</sup> They too have a stake in a mechanism for partisan communication that does not frontally violate "democratic centralism" and at least the facade of Party unity on which their common legitimacy rests. Central to the notion of partisan esoteric communication is its use in internecine struggle for power, not merely as a nuanced or differentiated formulation per se. The latter may be the logical consequence of a leader's functional responsibility and may or may not signify advocacy on a policy issue. As noted earlier, the consistently different language used by Brezhnev and Kosygin on agriculture in the late 1960s, on technology and dependence on the West in the early 1970s, and on energy in the late 1970s all turned out to be related to real shifts in policy. Yet it remains to be demonstrated that policy differences in these cases were surrogates for political jockeying for position. Moreover, the fact that Kirilenko now chooses to emphasize nuclear power and electricity while Dolgikh dwells on fossil fuels is arguably due above all to the fact that the two leaders have separate spheres of responsibility.

that the sender finds it worth the risk and trouble to resort to code, either because he is unable to communicate with his intended audience in any other convenient way, or because some special importance is ascribed to public declarations. Finally, Western theories of esoteric communication assume that the Western analyst can "eavesdrop" on this hidden conversation and interpret its real meaning, but that his eavesdropping is not so obtrusive as to cause the senders to start beaming their messages at *him* (in which case he becomes the audience and esoteric communication becomes disinformation).

This set of assumptions in itself requires a further assumption about the way power is formed in Soviet politics. If the key to power is monopoly of vital points in the Central Committee apparatus, especially the departments in charge of personnel appointments in the party and the government—in short, if power flows exclusively from the top down—then esoteric communication loses much of its purpose unless it is literally a symbolic form of infighting limited to the leadership itself. There is no point in beaming hidden messages to an audience if that audience has no political resources useful to the sender, if cadre appointments and private communication are what matter. (Indeed, in the 1930s it was the total lack of power of Bukharin's audience, in the face of Stalin's triumphant bureaucratic machine, that lends such a pathetic quality to his last Aesopian communications to them.) However, even at their height, both Khrushchev and Brezhnev had to reckon with the Party apparatus below; in retrospect, it is apparent that Stalin in the 1920s did also. Moreover, some Western specialists believe that as the Soviet system matures the importance of consensus-building within the wider elite (not just the Party apparatus) is growing, which makes it all the more important for political leaders to find ways to communicate with their followers, real or potential, outside as well as within the Party apparatus. If that is the case, then one might expect the rationale for partisan communication to be stronger than ever (but this raises the question of how esoteric such communications need to be).

How do these considerations affect our interpretation of the two articles just described? We must bear in mind that we are dealing here with the two most authoritative media in the land, *Pravda* and *Kommunist*. If *any* newspapers or journals are cleared by the leaders themselves or by their personal staffs, these two will certainly be at the top of the list, especially because one article involves an interview with a Politburo member and the other deals with political leadership. Therefore, the hypothesis that esoteric communication is present in these articles must start with the assumption that they were reviewed, at the very least, by the top authority in charge of the media (Suslov himself or his principal aides), who did not see fit to veto them before publication, and that the other leaders were either not consulted at all or had no objection.

How might it happen that the other major leaders were not consulted? Some Western analysts pointed out that the *Kommunist* article was prepared for publication when Brezhnev was on vacation in the Crimea and the only major leader in Moscow was Kirilenko. Should the appearance of the article be interpreted, then, as a swipe at Brezhnev by Kirilenko? The difficulty with the "vacation" theory is that it is hard to square with the suggestion of several respondents (and other indications) that since Khrushchev's fall, a review mechanism has been established within the Central Committee General Department, or possibly within Brezhnev's personal secretariat, to coordinate all the public pronouncements of the

leaders and to prevent the sort of Aesopian biting and scratching that took place prior to 1965. That system presumably operates no matter who is on vacation.<sup>32</sup> If we assume that the review mechanism worked as it was supposed to, the most plausible interpretation of the *Kommunist* article, if one insists on applying an esoteric interpretation, would be that it is a message from Brezhnev himself to his restless would-be successors. Clearly, however, the review mechanism works only so long as it commands the leaders' agreement or can be enforced among them. Has this been the case in the Brezhnev era? With these points in mind, we turn now to the testimony of our respondents.

### **Do Leaders Use the Media for Partisan Communication? Respondent Views**

It seems reasonable to assume that if Aesopian language has been in use for the last ten or fifteen years, middle-level Soviet journalists, officials, and experts would be part of the inside group that is privy to it (most were too junior in the Khrushchev period to have had relevant experience). As noted earlier, none of our respondents was highly enough placed to have had first-hand knowledge of the process of such communication in any specific case. Yet they were part of a network of professionals that was especially attuned to the real or imagined changes in the personal fortunes of political leaders. And they were careful readers of the Soviet press—people who read it with at least some awareness (gained from Western media and from Soviet polemics with Western interpretations of Soviet politics) of the kinds of assumptions Western observers have made about Kremlin politics.

So we asked our respondents, "Were you aware of intervention by individual political leaders in the handling of stories? Do you know of a mechanism by which such intervention could have taken place? Do you believe that such deliberate communication occurs? As an informed reader, did you look for it?"

Their answers, taken together, show strong disagreement with the notion that partisan esoteric communication is one of the common "rules of the game" in the USSR in the Brezhnev era. They maintained that manipulation of the media by individual leaders in defense of some minority political position would be a very unusual event. The notion that such interventions could be an accepted feature of Soviet politics was incredible to them. As one respondent put it:

There are no hints about leadership discussions or disagreements in the Soviet press. If Americans find something there, it is simply because they *think* they find something there. . . . Especially since Soviet journalists have far greater resources for hiding things than the Americans do for uncovering them.

Respondents maintained that partisan intervention in the media would violate norms of collective procedure and discipline that have become solidly established in the last fifteen years. As evidence, they pointed out to us that the few demonstrable exceptions have led to punishment, the outstanding cases being those of Shelest, Shelepin, and Polianskii.

<sup>32</sup> See the related reservation about "locusology" in Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner, p. 44.

**Violation of Norms of Collective Rule.** A former influential editor in Moscow put it this way:

[A man such as] Grishin [Politburo member and head of the Moscow Party City Committee] would never once in his life use the newspapers to show disagreement with, say, Kirilenko. Never once. . . . He understands that the most important thing for [the leaders] is to show the monolithic unity of the Politburo and the Central Committee. That is what they are always striving for. Would they really be such idiots as to let something slip into the newspapers? Sure, there are some members of the Central Committee apparatus who are aware of [disagreements among leaders], department heads or their deputies, for example; and rumors sometimes get out. But you will never find any of that in the newspapers.

Imagine the following: Suppose Grishin has formed some personal point of view about something. And suppose he calls up Spiridonov, the editor of *Moskovskaia pravda*, and says to him, "You know, even though Kirilenko thinks such-and-such, I think otherwise. So write your story in such a way that it will be clear that I have a different view." But that constitutes an information leak. And sooner or later news of it will reach Kirilenko, and Brezhnev too, because Spiridonov is a friend of Suslov's son—they attended the Philology Faculty together at the University. Within ten minutes Suslov will know what happened. Not only that, but Spiridonov has served overseas—I think he was in Africa at one time—and so he is linked to the KGB. So he will pass on what he heard to some KGB colonel or general, and within ten minutes Andropov will know about it too. Do you think Grishin doesn't know that? Do you think he doesn't understand that within ten minutes everyone will know? Of course he does! That's why he won't even say anything politically sensitive to his wife, because he knows that Andropov may have put a microphone under the bed, and he won't say anything over the telephone either. That's how men like that manage to keep their jobs for so long. And therefore don't look for such disagreements in the newspapers.

What if the call is not placed by the leaders themselves, but by one of their assistants? Or perhaps the message is delivered more discreetly, say, at a party at the leader's dacha? (To be sure, such informal urgings would be made only to chief editors.) Our respondents said that in their occasional contacts with high-level staffers, there was no attempt to apply pressure to alter wording or coverage in the direction of an individual leader's views.

One respondent who had had some contact with the workings of the Central Committee apparatus emphasized the importance of distinguishing between two sorts of cases. On the one hand, he said, there are frequent "suggestions" from high-level staffers (although not from the leaders themselves) on the right way to handle sensitive topics. But these "suggestions" (which in practice have the force of orders) are no more than implementations of the official line and do not represent the personal views of the leaders. As for the latter, he said,

I think that such cases could be found frequently at the beginning of the 1930s, when Bukharin wrote the kind of article that reflected his own point of view. I can't give you any recent examples, although I can't exclude that it could happen, especially in the field of agriculture or economic policy. It's possible, but this personal point of view would not be fundamentally different from the overall line of the Politburo. If it were, that is, if you were a Politburo member and you attempted to have published an opinion that was radically different from the accepted line, you would soon

meet the same fate as Polianskii, who is now ambassador to Tokyo: The other members would simply consider that you had violated the common trust.

Note here the implicit distinction between sensitive issues and less sensitive ones: Mild shades of difference might be tolerable in economic and agricultural affairs, but not in other fields. The same respondent gave his impression of how things happen in foreign affairs:

In international affairs the Politburo maintains a front of absolute unanimity, although I can guarantee that right now, in the wake of the aggression in Afghanistan, they are howling at one another—but the official position remains united. . . . On questions of lesser importance, such as whether a *kolkhoz* can make brushes or raise sheep, you can have different points of view, but not on questions of ideology or foreign affairs.

While it is clear that diverse opinions may be found in the Soviet press on matters more important than *kolkhoz* brushes, this view is substantially shared by the other respondents.

**Intervention Resulting in Punishment.** All of the cases of "improper" top-level intervention known to our respondents involved leaders who have been removed from the Politburo. The first case was that of former Ukrainian Party boss Shelest, believed to have been dismissed in part because of his Ukrainian nationalist sentiments, including favoring nationalist writings in the Ukrainian press (presumably through the Ukrainian Party Propaganda Department, which must have been more responsive to Shelest than the Central Committee Propaganda Department on some issues). The best example of such nationalist writings is his own book, *Ukraino nasha Radyanska*, published in Ukrainian only in 1970. Placing his own supporters in the Ukrainian Party apparatus, Brezhnev apparently forced Shelest's transfer from the position of Ukrainian First Secretary to a deputy premiership in Moscow in May 1972. He was dropped from the Politburo at the Central Committee session of April 26-27, 1973. In evident preparation for Shelest's dismissal, the April issue of *Komunist Ukrainy*, signed to the press on April 4, 1973, and distributed in early April, carried a hard-hitting editorial critique of Shelest's 1970 book.<sup>33</sup> In this case, then, improper intervention by a top regional leader and Politburo member in the regional media led to a sharp (quite non-esoteric) public condemnation just before he was dropped from the top leadership.

Another, far more ambiguous case concerns Shelepin: Sometime in the early 1970s, according to one of our respondents, the responsible censor and several members of the editorial board of *Trud* were removed after the paper had published an article by Shelepin (at that time head of the trade unions), which displeased other Politburo members. The article was an apparently innocuous discussion of the international workers movement, but something in it nevertheless displeased other Politburo members, who felt that Shelepin was advocating a younger leadership for the USSR, presumably beginning with himself. In our respondent's

<sup>33</sup> See Christian Duevel, "Protégé of Shelest and Podgorny Ousted in the Ukraine," *Radio Liberty Research*, January 29, 1973; Duevel, "An Unprecedented Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee," *Radio Liberty Research*, May 3, 1973; "Attacks on Shelest," *Radio Free Europe Research*, April 18, 1973; Grey Hodnett and Peter J. Potichnyj, *The Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis*, Occasional Paper No. 6, Canberra, Department of Political Science, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1970.

view, the hapless editors and censor were caught in an impossible dilemma. If they refused to print an article by the head of the parent organization, they were likely to be fired. What our respondent did not say was (1) whether they realized in advance that the article was likely to cause trouble; (2) if so, why they were unable to discreetly refer the matter to higher authority through the Central Committee so as to remove the heat from themselves; and (3) how *Trud* chief editor Subbotin retained his post. Although we could not verify this account, it is clear that Shelepin was in political decline, since he was dropped from the Politburo in April 1975.<sup>34</sup>

Several of our respondents also noted the case of "illegitimate" intervention in the media by Dmitrii Polianskii, who was widely considered to be sympathetic to the Russophile nationalistic "right wing" of Russia. Polianskii is said to have brought pressure on Soviet journals and newspapers to defend the work of Russian nationalist writer Ivan Shevtsov. Reportedly acting through the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee (which, as noted in Section II, lacked a regular head between 1970 and 1977 and was directed by acting head A. N. Yakovlev between 1970 and 1973, who would seem to have been hostile to Polianskii), Polianskii induced the newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossiia* to launch a public letter-writing campaign in favor of Shevtsov's 1970 book, *Vo imia ottsa i syna* (*In the Name of the Father and Son*), in an effort to offset the unfavorable reviews printed earlier by *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (April 9, 1970) and the mounting criticism of the book among intellectual circles. *Sovetskaia Rossiia* praised Shevtsov in its April 25, 1970, issue. Meanwhile, other newspapers were told to stop their criticism. However, critical reviews soon appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta* (May 13, 1970), *Iunost'* (May 1970), and *Pravda* (July 17, 1970).

Shevtsov's book was blatantly nationalistic, neo-Stalinist, and anti-Semitic. The support for him in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* reportedly brought objections from prominent literary figures, such as Leonid Leonov and Andrei Voznesenskii, who turned to the Central Committee's Ideological Commission in protest and attracted the attention of its chairman, Politburo member Mikhail Suslov. Suslov reportedly summoned the editors of the newspapers concerned to a special session of the Ideological Commission, at which Polianskii's role came to light. (The chief editor of *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, V. P. Moskovskii, was replaced by Alekseev in 1971; a respondent linked this with the Shevtsov affair, but we question this interpretation, since Moskovskii had sided with Voronov and opposed Polianskii on the issue of "agricultural links" and apparently fell with Voronov.<sup>35</sup>) The Russophile current was put on the defensive with a Central Committee decree of January 25, 1971, on culture, a subsequent plenum of the Writers' Union, and the replacement of *Molodaia gvardiia* chief editor Nikonov. Nothing happened to Polianskii at the time, but later, when he was removed from the Politburo, the Shevtsov affair was widely mentioned around Moscow as having been part of the bill of particulars against him.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Perusal of Shelepin's speeches (we found no "articles") in *Trud* in 1973 and 1974 failed to confirm this interpretation. Henry Hamm (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 10, 1975) viewed a *Trud* article by M. Baglai (evidently "Profsoiuzy protiv monopolii," April 26, 1973) as a partisan viewpoint by Shelepin on the international Communist movement, but a reading of that article failed to support his interpretation.

<sup>35</sup> Hahn, p. 260.

<sup>36</sup> One respondent claimed that the Agitprop official who actually pressured *Sovetskaia Rossiia* on Polianskii's behalf was then-deputy chief A. N. Dmitriuk, and that he was "fired" and given a post with



Polianskii was sympathetic to the "village" movement, a strain of Russian nationalistic sentiment that glorifies the traditional peasantry as one of the last sources of Russian virtues. A by-product of this movement has been a great deal of frank writing about the problems of the countryside. Polianskii evidently looked upon this kind of writing with favor, for he is said to have encouraged Boris Mozhaev, a journalist specializing in agricultural affairs, to write a number of particularly sharp pieces. However, in contrast to the Shevtsov episode, the Mozhaev articles were not considered illegitimate intervention, presumably because agriculture was Polianskii's proper zone of jurisdiction, and also because the "village" sentiment happens to dovetail with the stress of the Brezhnev Politburo on agriculture and the countryside. We can document Polianskii's interest in the related village consolidation movement; after *Literaturnaia gazeta* had begun a debate on the movement and criticized it, Polianskii, who supported it, met with the *Literaturnaia gazeta* authors and their opponents, the editors of *Sel'skaia zhizn'* and a top official of the government agency (*Gosstroi*) involved.<sup>37</sup> We were also told of another case in which Polianskii's support ensured publication of controversial material on the problem of rural depopulation. The concluding installment of a two-part article (begun in the July 23, 1966, issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta*) which decried the outflow of rural youths to urban areas in the Smolensk region could be published only after the editor had arranged for Polianskii's backing to overrule a demand (presumably made via the Propaganda Department) by Moscow party chief Yegorychev to cancel the article.

This contrast between "proper" and "improper" leadership interventions is important, because apparently many occasions arise for the leadership to intervene in the media, but in ways that are considered routine and totally unesoteric. Four such ways stand out in our respondents' minds: (1) official supervision of a given newspaper or other medium (in conjunction with the overall media responsibilities exercised by Suslov) by the Politburo member or Secretariat official whose sphere of responsibility covers the publication in question; (2) representation of a legitimate institutional viewpoint (whether in the course of authorized debate or during implementation); (3) intervention to defend institutional or elite prerogatives against journalistic *lese majeste*; (4) intervention by the top leader, as opposed to intervention by any other political figure. These other variations of high-level intervention definitely exist, but they are distinct from factional media debate through esoteric partisan communication.

**Manipulated Text and Doctored Photos.** Our respondents, lacking sufficient access, could not enlighten us about the origin and clearance of top leaders' own speeches and articles; the newspapers and other media organs the respondents worked for carried these items as received from TASS, without alteration. In principle, there is no "mechanical" reason why centrally cleared TASS material could not be used by the Party head and a Politburo majority to signal disapproval of individual leaders, but our respondents were unaware of any cases of partisan

the State Committee for TV and Radio Broadcasting. In fact, in January 1971, Dmitriuk became chief of the Committee's Main Administration for Local TV and Radio Broadcasting. He was also placed on the Collegium, or governing board, of the Committee and still held both posts in 1981. Yet Yakovlev too was removed from the Propaganda Department not long after a seemingly anti-Russophile article appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta* on November 15, 1972. Some of these issues are discussed in Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right*, Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978.

<sup>37</sup> Hahn, p. 201. *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 20, 1968, reported on the meeting.

leadership intervention in the editorial handling of TASS dispatches, and they strongly doubted that it could happen. But photographs of the leadership, unlike speeches, are not centrally supplied to the media but are prepared by major papers themselves, so our respondents could help us analyze the possibility of manipulation of leadership photographs. As discussed in Appendix C, we have concluded that leadership photographs are no longer, or are extremely rarely, "doctored" for partisan political purposes. One much-discussed possible case of this—the omission of Kirilenko from a photograph in *Vechernia Moskva*, on May 1, 1979—may be the result of technical error rather than political manipulation.

**Implications.** Our respondents' testimony suggests that partisan esoteric communication as an instrument of intra-leadership conflict, or partisan intervention of any kind in the media, has been an aberrant event in the Brezhnev period, and the leaders who engaged in it were punished. Our respondents did not look for partisan esoteric communication when they read the press themselves. If they were part of the audience for whom the coded message of esoteric partisan communication is intended, or part of the mechanism of communication, then, to put it mildly, the message is not getting across.

To be sure, our respondents were not high-ranking members of the political elite, yet it seems strange that they should not be part of the audience that is capable of understanding esoteric communication—or, at the very least, that they should not be aware, from friends or connections, that such a code exists. It might be argued that so great is the Soviet intellectual's mistrust of the press (a mistrust that, in the case of the journalist, is multiplied by the insider's cynicism) that the respondents could have excluded *themselves* from the audience without knowing it. The true audience may be the insiders of the apparatus, who, unlike the intellectuals, read the press carefully for "news of the profession." Yet it is difficult for us to imagine that if partisan esoteric communication were a regular feature of Soviet politics, seasoned Soviet journalists would not play the game.

It is also possible that there is a message, but not a deliberate one. It may be the unintended and possibly unconscious result of adjustment and anticipation by staff members and editors who reflect (deliberately or not) the views of leaders or elite tendencies or institutions they happen to represent or be beholden to, or the consequence of what our respondents termed "proper" intervention by leaders in the media. This could conceivably happen in several ways: Major leaders may appoint their protégés to leading positions in the media; certain leaders may have official responsibility for certain media and therefore may maintain an especially intimate relationship with them; different media may have different "missions" or "profiles" that happen to match similar differences in the responsibilities of different leaders (thus, for example, one might expect both the Defense Minister and *Krasnaia Zvezda* to take a slightly different tone on the "imperialist threat" from that reflected in the more "official" *Pravda* and that of Brezhnev himself); finally, such "reflections" of the views of individual leaders by different media could be a result of the very sensitivity of the antennae developed by successful Soviet editors, who may seek to favor rising leaders and neglect those in decline.

These are all possible instrumentalities for esoteric partisan communication, although of a more unconscious, less instrumental, and less personalized kind than that posited at the beginning of this section. And even so qualified, such indirect factional debate is at odds with the heavy hand of the Propaganda Department,

the absence of chief editors beholden to particular political patrons, and the separability of different policy views based on different functional responsibilities from the struggle for power under the consolidated Brezhnev leadership.

An esoteric code in Soviet politics, formed deliberately with a specific "inside" audience in mind, was most obvious during the 1920s, when there were clear splinter groups within the Party leadership whose sources of power were gradually being choked off after the formal ban on factions, in particular through denial of open use of the media to communicate their positions. Such a code could be seen again during the succession struggles of the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, as competing leaders took different positions on such sensitive questions as investment priorities (e.g., heavy industry vs. consumer goods) and relations with the West. What our respondents were describing to us is the situation under Brezhnev, that is, in a time of stable, cohesive leadership. Such a general absence of partisan esoteric communication suggests several things about the nature of Soviet politics in the Brezhnev period: Leadership politics are not a "war of all against all"; leaders' communication with lower levels of the Party apparatus does not occur primarily through the open media; top leaders are not motivated to actively lobby in public for support from wider segments of the Soviet elite; and under conditions of a cohesive, consolidated leadership, a leader who resorts to esoteric communication in the media is a leader in political decline.

Under Brezhnev there have been signs of a process that various Western observers have described as consolidation, stabilization, incrustation, or petrification. The signs include a dramatic slowdown of turnover in the top positions of the political and economic elites, the apparent growth of semi-routinized patterns of promotion and representation at all levels, and a tendency to approach policy questions in a technocratic and pragmatic rather than ideological style. If, as some observers believe, such developments will outlast Brezhnev, and if indeed one of the new rules of the game is that leaders' pronouncements are subjected to greater collegial review, effected by way of a central clearance mechanism in the Central Committee, then a revival of partisan esoteric communication is less likely than it might have been in previous leadership successions.

On the other hand, if the Soviet political system has not changed fundamentally, the Brezhnev succession may be expected to bring a revival of esoteric partisan communication, as an intense power struggle breaks out and existing centralized controls on leadership utterances break down. Indeed, in the wake of Suslov's death and as Andropov, Chernenko, and others appeared to try to position themselves to succeed Brezhnev, some observers have discerned just such a development.<sup>38</sup> Yet if our interpretation of the relative absence of esoteric communication in the Brezhnev period is correct, revival of such communication on any scale will

<sup>38</sup> Andropov and Chernenko were seen as taking different positions on "socialist democracy" in the USSR and hence appealing to different groups for political support ("USSR—Signs of Rivalry Between Andropov and Chernenko," *Radio Liberty Research*, May 25, 1982).

Other observers saw Chernenko as expanding his power at Kirilenko's expense in political maneuvering since Suslov's death. On March 5, 1982, Chernenko supervised the installation of the new All-Union Trade Union Council chairman, Stepan Shalaev, until then the timber industry minister. Three weeks earlier, *Pravda* (February 13, 1982) reported that Kirilenko strongly criticized the timber industry and ordered its leaders to improve their performance.

When the Leningrad literary journal *Aurora* published a story in its December 1981 issue about an old and famous author who takes an inordinately long time to die—the issue noted Brezhnev's 75th birthday, and the key passages appeared on p. 75—Western observers speculated that the article spoke

require (and signal) more leadership division and disarray than has sometimes been assumed. It will also indicate that Soviet politics remains less institutionalized and codified, more unpredictable and potentially "volcanic," than appeared to be the case under Brezhnev.

## CONCLUSION

The testimony of our respondents, critically evaluated, illuminates the process of organizing media campaigns and suggests that orchestrated pseudo-controversy and directed division of labor among various media organs are a central feature of the Soviet media system. Journalists are not mindless marionettes, however, and even as they implement the mobilizational functions of the media, they can sometimes generate, from below, controversial material. Yet their ability to do so has declined sharply since the Khrushchev era; moreover, even under the best of circumstances the energetic journalist risks blundering over hidden tripwires of leadership privilege or institutional sensitivities. Some open controversy among specialists is sanctioned debate divorced from immediate policy formulation. But, especially on domestic socioeconomic issues, media debate may reflect institutional or bureaucratic conflict—what we have termed lobbying and intra-elite policy debate. We have illuminated the latter category with examples from energy and cultural policy. In the Brezhnev period, factional debates conducted by partisan esoteric communication have been rare, although we have noted three apparent cases of partisan intervention in the media by three top leaders in decline.

In evaluating the information our respondents have supplied on media debate (and in approaching future émigré-based research on Soviet policy issues), it would be well to bear in mind that between the Soviet journalist, on the one hand, and the Soviet technical specialist, on the other, the Western analyst falls into a middle zone, which makes his reading of the Soviet press different from that of either. The Soviet technical specialist is accustomed to getting his information from the inside; he is contemptuous of the public media, even specialized publications, since he knows how little they usually reveal of what is really going on. The Soviet journalist, on the other hand, because he defines politics narrowly around the sayings and doings of the elite, and because he knows that much of the seeming diversity of the Soviet press is deliberately organized, tends to dismiss media controversy over technical issues as devoid of genuine political content. The Western analyst, in contrast, uses the public media because he has no other information sources, and he focuses on the technical issues of politics as an indirect means of shedding light on larger political issues because he assumes that the technical and the political mesh at every step in policymaking, that no policy starts or ends with a simple decree, and that the political system has yet to be invented that totally filters out of public view the disagreements that may arise within the elite.

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for elements in the Party who wanted Brezhnev to step aside as soon as possible (Nigel Wade, *Daily Telegraph*, March 4, 1982).

Finally, speculation that succession struggle rivalries were surfacing in the media was fueled when Politburo members, including Brezhnev, put in appearances at the staging of a new Moscow play about Lenin in his last year of life. It was noted that Chernenko had seen the play twice, but Kirilenko had not shown up. The play, "So We Shall Triumph," by M. Shatrov, was seen as taking a viewpoint identified with Chernenko in terms of its criticism of Stalin and its stress on the need for pragmatic leadership (Robert Gillette, *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1982).

In helping us to decipher particular cases of media debate, our respondents cautioned us against reading too much between the lines: Much controversy is sham, some is unrelated to policy or institutional interests, and some is a distant reflection of behind-the-scenes debate. Code and Aesopian language no longer play the role they once did. The contention of some respondents that media debate is never part of real debate must be approached with reserve, in the absence of more detailed case studies; indeed, our analyses of Polish media controversy and other Western studies of the USSR suggest the possibility that media debate can at times be a real, if not the most important, component of a policy dispute.<sup>39</sup> In any case, media debate can serve the Western analyst as at least a useful indicator of behind-the-scenes disputes.

<sup>39</sup> See Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, and Solomon, pp. 124. Some of Solomon's Soviet legal interlocutors viewed their own writings on legal policy matters as significant contributions to policy debates in the legal field.

## Appendix A

### A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Rand's study of the role of the media in intra-elite communication in Communist countries is based principally on extended interviews with individuals formerly involved in the media process—as writers, journalists, editors, censors, and government and Party officials—who subsequently emigrated from their countries and who are now in the West.

The study team compiled the names and professional biographies of Soviet émigrés with the requisite backgrounds and subsequently selected 56 individuals to be interviewed. Sixty-three interviews were conducted during 1978-1980. Seven individuals were reinterviewed to expand coverage of particular aspects of Soviet media: press photographs, Moscow Party press, and academic institute journals. The interviews were requested and conducted with the understanding that the respondents would remain anonymous. This condition has precluded the normal referencing of source material. The reader may wish to have more details about events and about the authority of sources, to evaluate the plausibility of the research findings. As in any sensitive elite interviewing project, however, that natural wish must be subordinated to protecting the interests of the respondents.

As a group, the interviewees had extensive working-level experience in various media fields. Almost half had been staff journalists or writers for Soviet newspapers and journals. Others worked as free-lance writers or published while affiliated as researchers with academic or technical institutes. None of the interviewees held top editorial positions in the central press, but a number had considerable experience as middle-level editors in Moscow and regional media. A breakdown of positions or career specialties follows; in many cases, individual respondents fall into several of these categories.

- Managing editors and department heads (13)

- Regional editors (5)

- Editorial board advisory members (2)

- Journalists (30)

- Moscow-based (18)

- Regional press (10)

- Ministry-associated (3)

- Literary (9)

- Foreign correspondents (1)

- Press agency personnel (5)

- Radio and TV personnel (12)

- Military media personnel (2)

- Press photographers (3)

Social science professionals (20)

International affairs specialists (8)

Officials and advisers (4)

The respondents were primarily Jewish (43 of 56), and they reported that their careers had been severely hampered, especially in the Brezhnev period, for this reason. There were excluded from access to policymaking circles, and relatively few had had personal dealings with CPSU Central Committee functionaries. Those who did obtained a restricted glimpse of the operations of the central apparatus which oversees the Soviet media system. As a rule, these interviewees' understanding of the nature and extent of higher Party and state authorities' involvement in the media process was based on information obtained from others. Hence these respondents were less able than their Polish counterparts to illuminate the workings of the upper levels of the media system. Yet they did possess much information on middle-level Soviet media operations. We paid particular attention to interviewees' involvement in media controversy or polemics.

The reliability of the information obtained in the interviews was considered to be a function of the degree to which the respondents had direct experience as well as a function of the number of people who had such experience in the same situations. In the case of our sample, this has specific implications. Because of Soviet hiring practices, none of our interviewees had direct personal experience as staff writers with *Pravda* or *Izvestiia*. Five had at some time published articles in *Pravda* relating to their field of specialty, but as outside free-lance authors. Our sample contained only one full-fledged foreign correspondent who regularly covered events abroad. Respondents were able to provide more reliable information on other media organs and practices, including *Literaturnaia gazeta*, *Moskovskaia pravda*, Kremlin photography, and foreign affairs analysis.

Project interviews were conducted, usually in Russian, occasionally in English, by members of the project team, all experienced analysts of Soviet affairs: Jeremy Azrael, Abraham Becker, Lilita Dzirkals, Thane Gustafson, A. Ross Johnson, and S. Enders Wimbush.

Interviews ranged from three to twelve hours in length. An open-ended interview protocol was utilized which included both standard queries for all respondents and questions focused on the specific backgrounds of individuals. Respondents were asked chiefly about their personal experiences, not about their interpretation of events. Interviews were conducted in conjunction with a reading of the relevant Soviet media. In some cases, we were able to ask respondents to comment on the origins and significance of specific articles they had published—although this proved less rewarding than in our interviews with Polish émigrés. Interviewees' accounts were subsequently checked for consistency with the accounts of other respondents and with what in fact appeared (as best we could check it) in Soviet media output. Where the written record clearly contradicted respondent testimony we disregarded that testimony. Where it helped confirm it, we have given the appropriate citation. Where we could not locate a reported publication because of its unavailability or for lack of a sufficiently precise reference, we have regarded the account as plausible but unconfirmed.

## Appendix B

### REVIEW OF SOVIETOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Assumptions about media-actor linkages in Western analyses of Soviet affairs are integral to the assumptions about the nature of Soviet politics. This appendix reviews the assumptions in these analyses, grouping the studies according to a classification developed in the course of a Rand review of Soviet foreign policy literature.<sup>1</sup> No attempt has been made to perform a comprehensive review or compile a systematic inventory of such assumptions. Our purpose is rather to present indicative assumptions utilized in major "schools" of the Western analytic literature.

#### KREMLINOLOGY

In contradistinction to the "totalitarian" perspective on Soviet politics, the Kremlinological approach assumes "that the Leninist Party, having formally banned factions and elevated 'democratic centralism' to a cardinal principle, did not therefore end internecine conflict but drove it underground. The protagonists had to battle clandestinely without explicitly violating the facade of Party unity on which their common political legitimacy rested."<sup>2</sup> Such conflict was carried out, *inter alia*, in the media but was expressed in esoteric terms not transparent to the uninitiated outside the top elite. Russian Communists aspiring to power, like many other challengers of authoritarian systems, had to couch their written arguments in oblique and Aesopian terms so that their writings would pass the Tsarist censors; the Bolshevik imperative of formal unity resulted in the perpetuation of this mode of discourse even after the Party leadership had itself taken control of the censorship apparatus. During high Stalinism, the intra-elite struggle was assumed to concern the fruits of secondary power; both before and after, the object of struggle was ultimate political power. Classical Kremlinology assumed that political struggle was rarefied; the impact of political institutions and social forces on the struggle for power at the top was marginal.

Initially, Kremlinology emphasized power struggle over policy conflict; it typically assumed that policy positions were merely symbols for essentially *ad hominem* conflicts about political power. But in the last two decades, some analysts have employed a broadened approach that has given more weight to the importance of policy disputes as such.

<sup>1</sup> Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner. Robert W. Cutler, "The Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy: Organizational and Cognitive Perspectives," *World Politics*, April 1982, pp. 418-436, also includes a useful review of some of the media-related analytic assumptions of six Western studies.

<sup>2</sup> Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner, p. 32. The importance of the facade of unity is illustrated by former Polish First Secretary Gomulka's brazen dismissal of "rumors" of "alleged internal struggles in the Party" (*Trybuna Ludu*, February 8, 1969) after his position had been fatally weakened by oppositional factions within the Party leadership.



Classical Kremlinology studied top-level struggle primarily by deciphering esoteric communications within the Soviet leadership. Ploss<sup>3</sup> argued that "the analyst may best ground his pertinent speculations on a detailed comparison of the differential verbal behavior and prominence of Soviet political personalities." The same analyst noted elsewhere:<sup>4</sup> "A proved reliability attaches to the jargon of Communist [public] discourse. . . . If this language is carefully examined over periods of time, in conjunction with the career patterns of Party leaders, issues and leadership alignments can be reasonably established."<sup>5</sup> The collected essays of Boris Nicolaevsky,<sup>6</sup> one of the "founders" of the Kremlinological school, contain examples of the latter assumption even under conditions of high Stalinism. Nicolaevsky's analysis of the "Beria affair," for example, assumed that Beria was able to control *Pravda* in March 1953 and cause it to issue statements in violation of agreed leadership directives. A number of analyses of early post-Stalinist developments rest on differentiation between *Izvestiia*, considered to speak for Malenkov, and *Pravda*, thought to represent Khrushchev. For example, this assumption is at the core of Pendell's<sup>7</sup> careful analysis of the impact of leadership conflict on Soviet policy toward the Third World between 1952 and 1956.

The Kremlinological school has generally assumed that not only differentiated verbal behavior of top leaders but *any* media differentiation on politically significant subjects is to be related to leadership controversy. An article by Ploss<sup>8</sup> is one example. Conclusions as to differences between Brezhnev and Kosygin on the strategy of Soviet economic development were supported by analysis of differentiated statements by the respective Soviet leaders published in *Pravda*. The conclusions were further buttressed by analysis of veiled partisan statements in elite media. A review in *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, "the journal of the State Planning Committee," was cited, inter alia, as an indicator of "flirting by Kosygin and his fellow managers of technology in the state bureaucracy with a Western type of economy"; on the other hand, *Lektsii po istorii KPSS*, a book by "Party 'historians' at work in the ideological branches of the General Secretariat," was cited as one of the "hostile reactions from Brezhnev and other Party technicians of power" to the Kosygin line. Ploss described a subsequent clash on the same issue between "some civilian and military leaders," citing implicit debate between *Krasnaia zvezda* and *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, on the one hand, and *Izvestiia* and *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, on the other.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney I. Ploss, "Studying the Domestic Determinants of Soviet Foreign Policy," *Canadian Slavic Studies* 1, 1967, pp. 44-59; reprinted in Erik P. Hoffman and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr. (eds.), *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, Chicago, Aldine-Atherton, 1971, pp. 76-90.

<sup>4</sup> Ploss, 1965.

<sup>5</sup> Some analysts attempt to go a step further and analyze individual leaders' media statements for their differentiated latent content. An example is Jan Triska and David Finley, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, New York, Macmillan, 1968, Chap. 4. Another example is Philip D. Stewart, Elizabeth Kirk, and Anne T. Sloan, *A Perceptual Approach to Soviet Elite Policy Orientations*, paper prepared for delivery at the 18th Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, St. Louis, Missouri, March 1977, which addresses the "identification and analysis of the policy-relevant perceptions of the Soviet elite," based on the explicit assumption that "individual attitudes and policy orientations" can be measured through analysis of media statements.

<sup>6</sup> Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite; "The Letter of an Old Bolshevik" and Other Essays*, edited by Janet D. Zagoria, New York, Praeger, 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Grant C. Pendell, Jr., *Foreign Policy and Political Factions in the USSR, 1952-1956: The Post-Stalin Power Struggle and the Developing Nations*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1969; summary version in Hoffman and Fleron.

<sup>8</sup> Ploss, 1970.

Ploss viewed this clash as continuing in the pre-SALT context. *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (publishing the views of Marshal Krylov) and *Krasnaia zvezda* (publishing those of Major General Lagovski) were cited as presenting the "hard-line propaganda" of the "military-political complex" seeking to preserve the status quo in the economic system; the political observer of *Izvestiia*, Bovin, was viewed as presenting the other side of the argument. "*Izvestiia* editors perhaps knew that a high-ranking official of the Soviet government did not share Marshal Krylov's belief in victory in nuclear war, and felt it safe to contradict the marshal in public."

Ploss' study also provides an example of analysis of explicit media controversy in the literary realm. Open dispute between *Novyi mir* and *Ogonyok* in 1969 was viewed as a manifestation of conflict between "rival factions in the Politburo." An unsigned *Pravda* article of September 12, 1969, calling for an end to ad hominem literary attacks was interpreted as representing a "truce" among these factions; this truce was, however, quickly broken by the hard-line faction (which subsequently forced the ouster of Tvardovsky as editor-in-chief of *Novyi mir*). *Izvestiia* is interpreted as presenting the viewpoint of "state leaders" in the controversy, while *Pravda* and *Sovetskaia Rossiia* speak for top "Party secretaries."

Dinerstein<sup>9</sup> argued that differentiation among major Soviet newspapers indicated "differences within Soviet leadership" during the 1962 missile crisis:

The case has been made that the editorials in *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, and *Red Star* presented different strategies for the missile crisis, and that the SGS [Soviet Government Statement of October 23] represented an amalgam of these views. If the argument is accepted, the circumstances in which these differences were put forward suggest that the differences in strategy were of long standing. The SGS itself was prepared quickly, and the divergent editorials accompanying the statement had to be composed in an even shorter time. Evidently the divergent editorials represented variant views within the government already defined with sufficient precision to permit the composition of distinctive editorials in short order.

The only protagonist identified in Dinerstein's analysis is an institutional actor, the military:

Each item in the catalogue of differences between the Soviet Government Statement and the *Red Star* editorial could be explained as an editorial vagary or as of little significance, but taken all together they argue for the existence of a separate Soviet military position differing from the combined position of the SGS and the *Pravda* editorial position.

Spechler<sup>10</sup> analyzed differences among the Soviet leadership on the Middle East by considering differentiated treatment of Middle East issues in media organs assumed to represent the views of top leaders:

... it was assumed [for the study] that each newspaper did speak for at least one influential or opinion group. Each paper selected reaches many thousands of readers. It is very likely that political elites would be anxious to use each of them to express their opinions. It is also likely that Politburo members would want to control them, to shape their treatment of the news in

<sup>9</sup> Herbert S. Dinerstein, *The Making of a Missile Crisis: October 1962*, Baltimore, Maryland, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

<sup>10</sup> Spechler, 1978.

accordance with their own views, and to appoint as editors individuals who would do that for them. Thus it is safe to assume that the opinions expressed in the pages of these papers would be those of powerful groups or individuals, probably (although not necessarily) including Politburo members.

*Pravda* was assumed to represent the views of Brezhnev "and his supporters within the Party apparatus." *Izvestiia* was regarded as an outlet for the views of "state and economic officials," with its general policy line conforming to the views of Kosygin. *Krasnaia zvezda* was assumed to speak for Grechko and "an influential segment of the military." *Sovetskaia Rossiia* was studied "because it had consistently been a voice of Russian nationalism" associated with Polianskii. *Komsomolskaia pravda* was analyzed "as a frequent mouthpiece for Soviet ideologues, the promoters and expounders of ideology and defenders of ideological orthodoxy in the ranks of the Komsomol, the Party apparatus and the KGB." *Trud* generally reflected "the opinions of Shelepin . . . and his supporters in the KGB and Komsomol."

Parallel assumptions are made by analysts of the Kremlinological school about the significance of differentiation and controversy among more specialized journals published by various research institutes, such as IMEMO, the USA Institute, and the Institute of Oriental Studies. Ra'anani,<sup>11</sup> for example, reviewing a study of Soviet policy toward the Third World, made the following argument about different viewpoints in such institute publications:

It seems reasonably clear that these semi-overt "debates" have mirrored differing perspectives and approaches advocated by personalities and factions within the top leadership, who have used the organs of the "Institutes," as well as their personnel . . . as a forum for surrogate policy contests. Consequently, this topic has provided a suitable "key" for deciphering aspects of the vicissitudes of the policy process within the Kremlin that, otherwise, might remain hidden.

Zorza<sup>12</sup> provides an example of such interpretation of the specialist media. His argument is indicated by his title, "In the Kremlin, a Debate on China Policy"; his analysis contrasts views of Kremlin "moderates," presented by the head of the China Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies in a foreign interview and by *Izvestiia* commentator Bovin, to those of "hard-liners," presented in an article "in a party historical journal sometimes used as a forum for hidden leadership debates [*Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 77, 1977]."

Hansen<sup>13</sup> exemplifies a modified Kremlinological perspective that does not focus solely on the top leadership but allows for some influence of lower-level groups on top leadership differences. Hansen analyzed multiple Soviet images of American foreign policy expressed in the media as a reflection and vehicle of top leadership conflict that is influenced by the interests and actions of sub-leadership groups:

. . . the variety of images in published Soviet materials suggested that images were also very much an instrument of politics . . . manipulated by Soviet leaders and interest groups as an instrument of competition with each other

<sup>11</sup> Uri Ra'anani, review of Roger E. Kanet (ed.), *The Soviet Union and the Developing Nations*, Baltimore, Maryland, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, in *Soviet Studies*, January 1977, pp. 54-55.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Zorza, "The Coming 'Breakthrough' on Arms?" *The Washington Post*, December 8, 1977.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Williams Hansen, *Soviet Images of American Foreign Policy: 1960-1972*, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, November 1974.

—not strictly to control mass audiences at home and abroad. Policy positions . . . were promoted and justified through the manipulation of images of American conduct by Soviet writers acting in support of leaders or bureaucratic groups.

The study contended that a dominant image of U.S. foreign policy existed in the media at any given time and indicated the preeminence in leadership councils at that time of the specific leadership group whose viewpoint it reflected. Although the thrust of Hansen's analysis is in terms of differences among Politburo members, he also contends that bureaucratic groups below the Politburo level exert an influence on leadership conflict via the media.

The press *mechanism*—the *process* by which top leaders' views are presented in the media, directly or by surrogates—has rarely been addressed in Kremlinological studies. The operation of the Party control/censorship system has seldom been considered; the implicit assumption that would seem to underlie most Western Kremlinological analyses is that continuous personal and factional conflict among the top leadership prevents any one element of that leadership, however powerful at any given time, from effectively utilizing the control/censorship mechanism to suppress partisan communication from other elements.<sup>14</sup> Rush<sup>15</sup> grappled with this problem in his study of the Stalin succession:

The power to publish a partisan communication is an important one in Soviet elite politics, and its exercise is one way of publicly demonstrating a leader's power position. Even minority factions in the top leadership have possessed this power of publishing an article which bears a partisan esoteric communication.

The mechanics of exercising this power, however, are not clear. In some instances a minority faction had access to *Pravda* for a partisan statement possibly as a result of bargaining between the two factions; in other cases, it has seemed unlikely that the dominant faction would have permitted publication had they been consulted. Apparently minority factions in the top leadership can occasionally publish subtle partisan statements, subject to counteraction by the dominant faction. This can take the form of a contradictory partisan declaration by the dominant group or, in extreme cases, of reprisals against the minority faction.

Ploss<sup>16</sup> offers a relevant interpretation of *Pravda's* modus operandi under Stalin; in his view, *Pravda's* lead articles and editorials "carried the full weight of [Stalin's] authority," while signed articles often represented partisan communication among contending elements of the ruling stratum just below Stalin. But such limited generalizations are rarely encountered in the Western literature.

## INSTITUTIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL AND SOCIAL GROUP ANALYSIS

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Kremlinological approach to Communist politics became the subject of a number of reviews and critiques by Western analysts. Critics

<sup>14</sup> Studies postulating a "totalitarian model" that minimizes top leadership conflict understandably assume that the supreme leader dominates the media process. Fainsod assumed that: "Like Stalin before him, Khrushchev monopolizes control of the media of mass communications, saturating the channels of public opinion with Party propaganda and permitting no outlet for political programs which challenge his own."

<sup>15</sup> Rush.

<sup>16</sup> Ploss, 1967.

of Kremlinology have urged that more research attention should "be paid to broader constituencies and wellsprings of policy positions adopted by individuals in the top leadership—on the one hand, interest groups and institutions; on the other hand, new social forces."<sup>17</sup> The concern with institutions parallels the fashionable concern with "bureaucratic politics" in the American context; concern with elite groupings and broader social forces assumes that the real constraints of the hierarchical political system notwithstanding, lower-level groupings can play an autonomous role in the political process.

A critique of the leadership "conflict model" of the Soviet system implies a critique of the media assumptions of the Kremlinological method, yet this step has rarely been taken. Rigby<sup>18</sup> was one of the few Western analysts to so address the leadership-media linkage:

... esoterically expressed public criticism is also, at times, a weapon in the Soviet political game, and this raises the further question of whether the press may sometimes play a more independent role in influencing the outcome of internal conflict than is generally believed ... our work on political conflict in the Soviet Union has been very top heavy; it has concentrated too much on Kremlinology. The Soviet press is replete with case material on conflict at the regional and local levels. Take the Anokhin case (1950), for example, an incident in what was evidently a continuing conflict between the Kharkov *obkom* and the Political Directorate of the Southwestern Railway, and involving ... clear evidence of some autonomous participation in the conflict by press organs at different levels.

Rejecting the Kremlinological approach, a number of Western analysts have focused on the role in the Soviet political process of large organizations and elite groups. The dominant tendency of this mode of analysis has been to ascribe uniform and abstract "interests" to large bureaucratic organizations and professional and occupational groups—the "secret police," the "economic managers," the "Party apparatchiki," the "military," etc. Some studies of this kind, utilizing logic-of-the-situation argumentation, have attempted to extrapolate from presumptive general interests to policy positions in specific cases.

It is the (often explicit) assumption of this genre of analysis that individual media organs represent the viewpoints of specific organizations or groups. Describing the military, the heavy-industry and light-industry managers, the agricultural experts, and the state bureaucrats as "policy groups," Brzezinski and Huntington<sup>19</sup> contended: "They advocate to the political leadership certain courses of action; they have their own professional or specialized newspapers which, at times and subject to overall Party control, can become important vehicles for expressing specific points of view; but for their own sake they are careful not to cross the shadowy line between advocacy and pressure."

Lodge<sup>20</sup> explicitly assumed that groups speak out through their own media organs. Rejecting media assumptions of the totalitarian and Kremlinological models that "typically portray Soviet communications channels as being monopolistically

<sup>17</sup> Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Rigby.

<sup>19</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR*, New York, Viking Press, 1964.

<sup>20</sup> Milton C. Lodge, *Soviet Elite Attitudes Since Stalin*, Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill, 1969.

controlled by the central Party apparat" (in fact a usual assumption of the totalitarian but not the Kremlinological approach), Lodge asserted:

... the Soviet specialist elites—due to their strategic role in society—enjoy sufficient leeway in the system to articulate a distinctive range of beliefs and values in their specialist journals.

Soviet spokesmen grudgingly acknowledge and Western analyses have demonstrated that specialist journals are vehicles for the limited articulation of elite attitudes. Representing a functional sphere of activity in the political system, specialist journals primarily perform an instrumental role—authors, as experts, elaborate on policies within their sphere of competence, suggest ways and means for improving implementation, mobilize support, and, most important of all, criticize shortcomings.

... although specialist journals are rarely vehicles for an open and direct confrontation with the Party, specialist attitudes are articulated through instrumental proposals and criticism.

In order to examine group attitudes, Lodge selected for content analysis the following "representative elite" periodicals:

The Party apparat

*Kommunist*

*Partinaii zhizn'*

The economic elite

*Voprosy ekonomiki*

*Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*

The military

*Krasnaia zvezda*

The legal profession

*Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*

*Sovetskaia iustitsiia*

The literary elite

*Oktiabr'*

*Literaturnaia gazeta*

*Novyi mir*

The same basic assumptions about expression of particular elite group viewpoints in specific publications underlay the studies of Angell, Dunham, and Singer,<sup>21</sup> and Paul.<sup>22</sup>

While the above studies consider media organs as representing elite attitudes, Dimant-Kass<sup>23</sup> treated them more as institutional mouthpieces. Examining Party and military attitudes on the Middle East, Dimant-Kass concluded that "basic policy differences in the USSR may be strongly expressed in the publications of particular institutions or interest groups." Such institutional mouthpieces present a uniform

<sup>21</sup> Robert C. Angell, Vera S. Dunham, and David J. Singer, "Social Values and Foreign Policy Attitudes of Soviet and American Elites," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 8, 1964, pp. 329-492.

<sup>22</sup> David W. Paul, "Soviet Foreign Policy and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia: A Theory and a Case Study," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 2, June 1971, pp. 159-202.

<sup>23</sup> Dimant-Kass.

and consistent position, even though one might assume the institutions or organizations they speak for are themselves internally divided.

... one is examining organs which are the officially declared mouthpieces of such vast and heterogeneous institutions as, say, the Central Committee of the CPSU or the Ministry of Defense (represented by *Pravda* and *Krasnaia zvezda* respectively). It is hardly probable that this intrinsic heterogeneity would allow the elaboration of a uniform line on an issue with such far-reaching political, economic, ideological and strategic ramifications as the Soviet involvement in the Middle East. And yet, each of the organs investigated did present a unified line vis-à-vis the lines propagated by other (rival) institutions. Hence the possibility that a press organ is not controlled by and does not serve as mouthpiece for an institution as a whole, but rather the group currently in ascendancy within a given institution. In other words, it is plausible that the group currently in power uses the institution's organ as its exclusive platform, denying it to intra-institutional opposition.

In Dimant-Kass's view, when the military leadership feels that its interests are challenged by the Party leadership,

... it appears to embark upon a campaign designed to impress the decision-makers that Soviet national interests are being threatened. The opinions which are then voiced by the military organs are intended, presumably, to reinforce the pressure being applied in closed forums, and geared to shift the political balance.

In the same vein are analyses of *Morskoi sbornik* (and in particular Admiral Gorshkov's series, "In War and Peace") that treat the journal as the institutional mouthpiece of the Soviet Navy.<sup>24</sup>

Zimmerman and Axelrod<sup>25</sup> analyzed differentiated Soviet media views of the "lessons" of Vietnam, classified according to a "left-right" dichotomy. The emphasis is on media differentiation, with attention to differences in types of articles within journals, as well as among journals. This differentiation is viewed as indicating "differing policy perspectives competing for attention and support" and "a policy debate covering a significant range of opinion" so as to cast doubt on a "general line." Policy orientations in two media organs are linked to institutions and groups—"Americanists writing in *SShA*," and the military—while *Pravda*'s "rightist" orientation is said (in the Kremlinological tradition) to suggest that "in 1973 Brezhnev was somewhat ahead of other members of the Soviet ruling group in advocating improved US-Soviet relations, and ... his position was not merely reflecting a consensus within the leadership."

## INTEREST GROUPING ANALYSIS

The "interest grouping" school of Western analyses joins with the institutional/elite group school in criticizing Kremlinology for excessive preoccupation with con-

<sup>24</sup> E. L. Warner, letter to the editors, *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1974, pp. 78-79; John Erickson, in Michael McGwire et al., *Soviet Naval Policy*, New York, Praeger, 1975. Analysis of the Gorshkov series under McGwire's direction has utilized the suggestive technique of searching for anomalies in such indicators of the publishing process as date signed to typesetting and date signed to press. See R. Weinland, in McGwire.

<sup>25</sup> Zimmerman and Axelrod.

flict among the very top leadership. The critics of Kremlinology agree that the indisputably strong constraints of the hierarchical political system do not limit significant political activity to the level of the Politburo. In contradistinction to the institutional/elite group school, analysts of the "interest grouping" persuasion focus on the coalescing in particular cases of specific lower elite-level political groupings, usually cutting across a number of internally divided Soviet institutions.

Skilling and Griffiths<sup>26</sup> present a number of studies that attempt to delineate crypto-organizational forms through which partial "interests" are espoused in the Soviet context. Skilling contends that under Khrushchev various experts, specialists, and specialized elite groups were able to significantly influence policy. These elements "exerted their influence through their institutes and associations, and through newspapers, scholarly journals, and special conferences." Such public advocacy of the views of interest groupings is seen as a significant complement to more direct approaches to policymakers:

... [an] uncommon form of group activity has developed outside the formal system of political authority and has employed unusual techniques ... This has involved an indirect approach to the policymakers through public debate. ... In a kind of surrogate for democracy of the more usual type, this debate takes place not on the floor of a parliament or congress, nor in electoral contexts, but mainly in the conferences and the publications of professional and scholarly associations, and in the newspapers and magazines generally. The evidence concerning this type of group conflict is chiefly to be found in the specialized publications of scholars (for instance, *Voprosy ekonomiki*, the literary magazines *Novyi mir*, *Oktiabr'*, etc.); the professional newspapers of the military, the teachers, or the scientists; the general newspapers, such as *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*; and the works published by scholars and creative writers.

Yet Skilling stresses that policy-relevant media differentiation cannot be assumed to emanate entirely "from below":

The regulated nature of the discussion, especially in its written form, suggests that the diversity of view is the result not merely of initiative from below by individuals, but also of decisions by persons in authority, who approve or perhaps sometimes sponsor certain lines of argument. Editors, publishers, Agitprop officials, even censors, and in some cases, political leaders, are thus involved in this interplay of group attitudes and interest.

Griffiths' study of internal Soviet debate about relations with the United States<sup>27</sup> provides an illustration of some of these media assumptions in a specific case. This study discerns four contending images of the United States in Soviet media and analyzes the interplay between these images and Soviet policy. Griffiths argues that the post-Khrushchev oligarchic leadership permitted various elite institutes and organizations to play an increased role in the policy process. Particular images of the United States tended to be espoused by specific institutions—"soft" views, for example, by IMEMO, and "hard" views by organizational and propaganda organs. The study contends that the principal viewpoint of an institution was determined by its head, who had a patron in the top leadership and who was expected to "generate

<sup>26</sup> Skilling and Griffiths.

<sup>27</sup> Griffiths.



partisan analysis for a particular view." Yet in fact, differences of opinion within a specific institution were frequently observed, suggesting to Griffiths the overriding importance of personal ties and informal groupings as the basis for espousal of a particular viewpoint. The debate among such crosscutting groupings was sometimes able to assume a life of its own apart from top leadership conflict.

Griffiths' study postulates additional specific assumptions about the role of the media in this context. Coordination of views among the members of a particular transinstitutional interest grouping is speculated to have occurred *primarily* "through the signaling of opinions [via the media] among individuals who could not consult as a group or faction." In this signaling process, "leaders could be expected to indicate what should be said by lower participants, given the balance of forces at the elite level" while lending behind-the-scenes assistance to their specialist supporters. The media were also utilized, Griffiths assumes, to advocate a point of view and confront directly opposing groupings:

... specialist commentators sought to influence specialist spokesmen of other institutions, to affect opinion within the Party more generally, and to influence the choice of key formulations in official Party documents. . . . Polemical criticism served . . . to "smoke out" the opposition, and to discredit it in the eyes of other specialists and officials.

Analyses of this genre uniformly link "crypto-politics" at lower levels with factional conflict among the top leadership; they differ, however, on the necessary directness of that linkage. Stewart,<sup>28</sup> an exemplary study of the repeal in 1964 of Khrushchev's "production education" scheme, emphasizes (more than Griffiths) the autonomous role of such interest grouping activity. Stewart argues that the advocacy of lower-level groupings occurred prior to and indeed caused the involvement of Politburo-level leaders. The analysis is not confined to interpreting media nuances but draws upon a solid empirical base of explicit differences among various pedagogical institutions and lower-level officials. The printed media are considered to be one of the forums for such interest grouping advocacy; particular journals were treated as both channels for partisan communication by a particular grouping and (through the activities of the editor-in-chief) as full-fledged constituent members of such groupings. For example, the study depicted among the leading opponents of production education Goncharov, vice-president of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and editor of its principal journal, *Sovetskaia pedagogika* (which originally communicated some of the oppositional views). Among the supporters of production education were the chief editor of *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, an organ of the RFSFR Ministry of Education (itself a staunch defender of production education). *Izvestiia* initially carried arguments of both defenders and opponents of production education, but then came down on the side of the opponents—an action that Stewart assumes was in response to top leadership involvement:

The assumption here is that when either of the two most important Soviet papers, *Pravda*, the organ of the Party Central Committee, or *Izvestiia*, the organ of the USSR Council of Ministers, takes an editorial position on questions under discussion it does so ordinarily only in accord with the wishes of some leadership faction. On the other hand, when a less important paper

<sup>28</sup> Stewart.

or journal takes such a position, this assumption may not hold. *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, for example, may take positions reflecting only the opinion of the Ministry of Education, or some grouping within the Ministry. But it may also respond to central pressures. The point here is that this response does not necessarily always occur.

Subsequently, *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, originally a consistently staunch defender of production education, was split: The deputy editor began to espouse the cause of the opponents of production education, while the chief editor continued to articulate the views of the defenders.

Ra'an<sup>29</sup> also assumes more autonomous scope for lower-level elite controversy under conditions of top-level leadership conflict. Analyzing public differences of view on the Middle East in the mid-1960s, this study considered as one group participating in the debate "academician-journalists, some of them young political economists, from the Oriental . . . Institutes, grouped mostly around the journal *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* but enjoying growing support (through Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubei?) from the central organs of publication."

Other studies postulate a greater dependency between lower-level interest grouping activity and top-level leadership conflict. In contrast to Stewart and Ra'an, Schwartz and Keech,<sup>30</sup> analyzing the 1958 educational reform that introduced production education, considered that lower-level group activity was preceded by and reflected top-level leadership controversy. In this view, a minority in the Politburo attempted to strengthen its position by mobilizing specialists at lower levels, "urging them to state their position on the issue in their specialized publications." That is to say, the views in these publications were indeed those of the specialists, but they were orchestrated from higher levels. Yet, the study asserts, the communications process itself, both through the formal mass media and through informal personal interaction, facilitates group consciousness and influence.

The "interest grouping" school of analysis differs from the institutional/elite group school discussed earlier, principally in that it views large organizations and groups as themselves internally divided on specific policy issues. Lee and Scott<sup>31</sup> provided a revealing illustration of this point and assumptions about the media that follow. They took issue with the Party-military dichotomy assumed in many Western analyses of the USSR and the related assumption that *Krasnaia zvezda* and other "military" publications are consistent institutional mouthpieces of the military. (As noted, Lodge and others make this assumption.) Lee and Scott pointed out that the "Red Hawks" (Colonels Rybkin, Bondarenko, et al.), often interpreted to be spokesmen for military hard-liners vis-à-vis the Party, are in fact part of the political commissar establishment, the Main Political Administration, which is a section of the Central Committee apparatus. This study suggests that "if some of the truculent words written by the young colonels do indeed reflect disagreement on major policy issues, the contending factions may cut across the formal lines of the Party, government, and military bureaucracies." The same assumption underlies Kolkowicz,<sup>32</sup> an

<sup>29</sup> Uri Ra'an, "Moscow and the 'Third World,'" *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 14, January-February 1965, pp. 22-31.

<sup>30</sup> Joel Schwartz and William R. Keech, "Group Influence on the Policy Process in the Soviet Union," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXII, September 1968, pp. 840-851.

<sup>31</sup> Unpublished paper, Stanford Research Institute, 1970.

<sup>32</sup> Kolkowicz.

analysis and translation of a key 1966 Rybkin article. Garthoff<sup>33</sup> offers yet another interpretation of such distinctive viewpoints in the military press; they “presumably reflect differing views held within the senior ranks of the professional military” but communicate unhappiness with then-Minister of Defense Grechko’s inadequate representation of the institutional military viewpoint in national decisionmaking councils.

Lower-level issues of no direct concern to the top leadership should provide an opportunity to examine “interest grouping” activity via the media. But in fact, few case studies exist. One suggestive study is Campbell’s analysis<sup>34</sup> of media debate among specialists on the desirability of building Soviet airships—an issue without evident ramifications for the top-level political leadership. Campbell argues that in that case, one was able “to observe a debate with an unmistakable trend and identify the persons associated with specific points of view as well as the organizations or institutions with which they are affiliated.” This debate pitted the civil aviation “establishment” headed by the Ministry of Aviation against various “volunteer design bureaus” and potential users of airships in such fields as forestry and polar research. Campbell argues:

The significance of the debate arises because the proponents [of airships] represent a number of potentially important customers [i.e., users] whose needs heretofore have not been satisfied by the usual procedures of the aviation industry and whose discontent has been expressed through a non-bureaucratic channel, the Soviet press.

The “debate,” as analyzed by Campbell, was in fact conspicuously one-sided, most of the published articles advocating airship construction. The editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* (in the February 14, 1968, issue) explicitly sanctioned this advocacy, noting that proponents of airships “are deprived of the opportunity to prove their correctness in special journals and at technical conferences,” and that the Aviation Ministry opponents of airships would not join in the debate and publish their objections in *Literaturnaia gazeta* unless all pro-dirigible articles were suppressed.

## ANALYSIS OF SPECIALIZED INSTITUTES

The various Soviet scientific and research institutes established or revitalized in the 1960s have received much attention in the Western analytical literature. This preoccupation is understandable, since the publications (and some of the staff members) of these institutes are accessible and frequently offer novel or differentiated interpretations of policy-significant issues. The studies we have discussed contain a range of assumptions about the relationships of the institutes and their publications to elements of the top leadership. On the one hand, analyses such as that of Ra’anan<sup>35</sup> treat institute publications as surrogates for top leaders; on the other hand, Griffiths’ study<sup>36</sup> assumes considerable autonomy for the institutes, including their role in public debate.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Garthoff, “The Soviet Military and Arms Control,” *Survival*, November-December 1977, pp. 242-250.

<sup>34</sup> Heather Campbell, *Controversy in Soviet R&D: The Airship Case Study*, The Rand Corporation, R-1001-PR, 1972.

<sup>35</sup> Ra’anan, 1977.

<sup>36</sup> Griffiths.

Studies of Soviet foreign policy through the mid-1960s generally adopted a unitary actor perspective and, inter alia, treated shifting views in institute publications as indicators of a shifting "Soviet" line. (An example is Kanet.<sup>37</sup>) More recent studies of Soviet policy toward specific regions often include examination of internal Soviet discussion of foreign-policy-relevant issues and generally assume considerable autonomy for the institutes and their publications; they reject the Kremlinological assumption that controversy in specialized institute publications reflects controversy among the top leadership. Legvold,<sup>38</sup> for example, argues (with reference to Soviet policy toward Africa) that the increasing autonomy of research institutes has largely invalidated the utility of their publications as an indicator of top-level disagreement. The Western analyst should look to different media output for policy-related communications:

Without arguing the indefensible proposition that academics and journalists enjoy autonomy, their work had by 1967 become increasingly difficult to use as an accurate measure of the prevailing attitude in Ponomarev's section of the Secretariat. This is not to say that contrasting views and a dialogue among different commentators had emerged for the first time. Conflicting points of view among Soviet experts were long a feature of Soviet publications, but previously it was easier to establish who had the sympathy of the politicians—such as, for example, the liberals within *MEiMO* in 1964. Thus it may be significant that one heard less from the staff in *MEiMO* in 1966 and 1967. Since 1965, it seems to me that anyone interested in policy must pay closer attention to the links between commentators and official circles. As a general observation, I found myself relying more and more on the essentially nonacademic analyst, a man like Kudryavtsev, or on the academic with responsibilities closer to policy formulation—a man like Ulianovskii or Solodovnikov. Those in the last category more often than not turned out to be generalists, basically concerned with current political problems, rather than specialists with comprehensive area training and a preference for more rigorous scholarship.

Similar assumptions underlie studies of Remnek<sup>39</sup> and Trumbull;<sup>40</sup> both argue that academic specialists can no longer be considered apologists for policymakers but have gained considerable autonomy, a development indeed encouraged by the Party leadership in the 1960s so that it might profit from fresh and critical (the implication is, also multiple) appraisals of international developments. The publications of the specialists are intended to have an influence on long-run policy but do not directly reflect leadership controversy. Trumbull argues more generally with regard to Soviet policy toward Africa that "*Pravda* and *Izvestiia* reflect the official short-term response to an issue." *Za rubezhom* is considered to play an important role, for "the translations selected for publication in this unique weekly often reflect conditional acceptance of a sort of Soviet policy by proxy. For long-term Soviet assessments of African affairs, the primary sources are the scholarly journals and monographs by

<sup>37</sup> Roger E. Kanet, "The Recent Soviet Reassessments of Developments in the Third World," *The Russian Review*, Vol. 27, 1968, pp. 27-41.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Legvold, *Soviet Policy in West Africa*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1970.

<sup>39</sup> Richard B. Remnek, "Soviet Scholars and Soviet Foreign Policy: A Case Study," in Richard B. Remnek (ed.), *Soviet Policy Towards India*, Durham, North Carolina, Carolina Academic Press, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Perry Trumbull, *The Soviet Union and the Nigerian Civil War: Policy, Ideology, and Propaganda*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1973.

Soviet Africanists and international affairs specialists." Garthoff<sup>41</sup> makes similar assumptions about the academic institutes.

## INDETERMINANT ANALYSIS

A final genre of Western analyses searches for media differentiation of evident relevance to intra-elite conflict, depicts opposing viewpoints in a particular case, and explicitly or implicitly assumes they are politically significant, but refrains from attempting to identify the groups or individuals whose differentiated views are so represented. For example, Taubman,<sup>42</sup> reviewing Soviet views of the United States, presents both a standard Soviet version and "apparent variations which may be signs of more basic disagreement," but cautions that "evidence is far too fragmentary to try to arrange writers into interest groups or clearly delineated schools of thought." Wolfe<sup>43</sup> describes a dominant Soviet outlook on national security but adds that "the shared attitudes described are not universally held within the Soviet elite. There are varying shades of a minority outlook." Depicting minority views presented in the media, the study draws conclusions, not about intra-elite conflict, but concerning the possibility of a future modification of the dominant viewpoint. In an earlier study, Wolfe<sup>44</sup> reviewed the "muted debate" in various Soviet publications between a "détentist camp," constituted in part by members of the USA Institute, and various "military spokesmen" writing under the aegis of the Main Political Administration. He argued that the debate "might be related to contention over alternative security approaches within the upper echelons of the Soviet policymaking system." In support of this line of argument, Wolfe referred to the analogous debate under Khrushchev on the rationality of nuclear war, which did reflect top-level differences over strategic issues.

<sup>41</sup> Garthoff.

<sup>42</sup> William Taubman, *Soviet and Western Views of Each Other's Future in an Interdependent World*, Amherst College, June 1977 (unpublished paper).

<sup>43</sup> Thomas W. Wolfe, *The Military Dimension in the Making of Soviet Foreign and Defense Policy*, The Rand Corporation, P-6024, 1977.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas W. Wolfe, *The SALT Experience: Its Impact on U.S. and Soviet Strategic Policy and Decisionmaking*, The Rand Corporation, R-1686-PR, 1975.

## Appendix C

### THE CASE OF THE MISSING KIRILENKO

One of the most tantalizing phenomena in Soviet politics is the seeming "mistakes" that occasionally crop up in Soviet newspapers. A first deputy chairman may find himself referred to as a mere deputy, or he may be omitted in the caption of a picture in which he is clearly present; and since these little episodes frequently involve matters of protocol, about which the Soviets are extremely punctilious, Western analysts have traditionally treated them as a form of esoteric political communication,<sup>1</sup> especially since they often turn out to coincide with other signs of political tension or foreshadow a high-level shake-up. Consequently, they have an accepted place in the Kremlinologist's tool box.

The classic forms of esoteric communication involve no tampering; rather, a political figure, by incorporating subtle changes or hints in his own text, such as a variation on a well-known ideological phrase or political formula, sends a hidden message—but the text is presumably his own and so is the message. What is special about "errors" or "omissions" is that if we are to attach political significance to them, we must assume that someone else intervened to order them to happen.

But the evidence for such tampering, as trial lawyers would say, has always been strictly circumstantial, consisting, first, in the suspicious coincidence between "mistakes" and concurrent political goings-on, and second, in the well-deserved reputation of Soviet newspapers for typographical accuracy. One of the cardinal tenets of Kremlinology is that the Soviet press does not make mistakes. In this appendix, however, we shall reconstruct a famous case of one such "mistake," to show that the circumstantial evidence of esoteric communication, persuasive as it may be, can nevertheless be challenged by plausible counterexplanations. The case is that of the missing Kirilenko.

When Moscow's evening newspaper, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, reached the streets on May 1, 1979, a small detail caught the attention of Western observers. In a front-page picture of the Soviet leaders, taken as they reviewed the traditional May Day parade from the parapet of the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square, one man was missing: Andrei Kirilenko, third secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, one of the most powerful men in the Politburo and one long considered a possible heir to Brezhnev. The mystery deepened when *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* appeared the next day, for in what was visibly the same group photograph, Kirilenko had been restored to his proper place. Theories began to circulate among the puzzled Westerners. Was the omission a political snub? By whom, and for what purpose? Some speculated that Kirilenko might have been deliberately slighted by the head of the Moscow Party organization, Viktor Grishin, for, like *Moskovskaia pravda*, *Vecherniaia Moskva* is an organ of the Moscow *gorkom*. Others suggested that Konstantin Chernenko, a Brezhnev favorite who was widely seen as Kirilenko's rival for the succession, was responsible.<sup>2</sup> Those who closely watched Soviet newspapers and journals found addi-

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, some of them are so blatant that they are hardly esoteric at all.

<sup>2</sup> David Binder, "Doctored Pictures Indicate Race to Succeed Brezhnev," *New York Times*, May 28, 1979.

tional esoteric evidence suggesting that Kirilenko had indeed suffered some loss of standing. Less than one month before, his protégé Iakov Riabov had been demoted from his post as Central Committee secretary to the less prestigious position of first deputy chairman of Gosplan; and there were other signs pointing in the same direction.<sup>3</sup> There seemed to be some corroboration, therefore, for the theory that the omission of Kirilenko in *Vecherniaia Moskva* was more than a technical error.

The doctored leadership photograph is one of the colorful traditions of Kremlinology, and there have been several well-documented cases of it in the past. After Stalin had triumphed over his rivals in the 1930s, official photographs began to appear with the losers excised. Leon Trotsky, in particular, soon disappeared from any picture that suggested that he had been close to Lenin or that he had played any prominent role in the heroic beginnings of Soviet rule. Another famous case occurred shortly after Stalin's death, when a "doctored" photograph omitted ex-police chief Lavrenti Beria, who had been standing next to Stalin in the picture, making Malenkov appear closest to Stalin instead. The memory of such episodes lingers on. Was the Kirilenko episode an instance of that kind?

The purpose of this appendix is to examine the Kirilenko episode in detail and to test the plausibility of the various theories put forward to account for it. Most of the material for this evaluation comes from interviews with three former Soviet news photographers, two of whom had long experience in taking official photographs of political leaders. From their knowledge of the technical aspects of photojournalism as it is practiced in the Soviet Union, we have attempted to reconstruct the steps through which an official leadership photograph typically passes, from the time it is taken to the time it is published.

Before reviewing the evidence in detail, it would be well to bear two points in mind. First, it has been a long time since there has been a clearly documented case of overt political doctored of leadership photographs. A review of the works of Western Kremlinology and discussions with several Western analysts revealed only one clear-cut case since 1953, a peculiar episode in which V. N. Titov, Central Committee Secretary and head of the Central Committee's Organizational Department, was excised from leadership pictures in some newspapers (but not others) just days before his demotion to a Party position in Kazakhstan in 1965.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, all the known instances in which political leaders have been excised from photographs occurred *after* the leader in question had fallen or his fate was already sealed; there is no known case of a political leader undergoing excision while the rivalry was still going on. Nor has Kirilenko disappeared: However much he may have faded politi-

<sup>3</sup> For example, in the 1979 Supreme Soviet election campaign, *Pravda* and the central press consistently described Kirilenko only as a prominent "Party" figure, even though the other major Politburo members were "prominent Party and state figures." Interestingly, some of the local versions of nominations for Kirilenko (such as that in *Pravda vostoka*) gave him the same honorific as the other members.

<sup>4</sup> *Pravda* carried the photo including Titov on March 19; *Izvestiia* of March 20 carried the photo with him (and only him) carefully cut out. Some other papers (*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, *Sel'skaia zhizn'*, and Ukrainian papers) followed *Pravda's* example, while others (*Trud*, *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, *Moskovskaia pravda*, *Leninskoe znamia*) followed that of *Izvestiia*.

The background is briefly this: In the spring of 1965 (it is believed), CPSU Second Secretary Podgorny challenged First Secretary Brezhnev for top leadership. Titov was Podgorny's man in charge of the key cadres sphere, and his removal was one of the first signs that Podgorny had lost the struggle. The Central Committee then adopted a decree condemning the Khar'kov Party organization (Titov's former bailiwick) for laxness in admissions to the Party (an implied rebuke to cadre chief Titov also). Later in the year, Podgorny lost his key post of Second Secretary (and cadres supervisor) and his challenge to Brezhnev ended.

cally over the last three years, he is still very much in office, or at any rate as much as his physical health allows. Consequently, our interpretation must give due weight to the historical record: For Grishin or Chernenko, or indeed Brezhnev, to order Kirilenko excised from a leadership photograph while he was still in office would be, even by the standards of the 1930s, an extremely unusual step.<sup>5</sup>

Since Brezhnev's consolidation of power, the public style of the Soviet leaders has been very discreet. They have avoided, for the most part, the small signs that Kremlinologists have traditionally watched to determine minor or major shifts in the relative standing of the leaders. To be sure, during the period when Brezhnev was still consolidating his power (particularly in 1969-1971), there were interesting variations from leader to leader in the use or omission of the formula "the Politburo headed by General Secretary L. I. Brezhnev" in their utterances and signed writings. But that is not doctoring; as far as we know, the decision whether or not to use the formula was made by the speaker or writer himself.

Another of the very few episodes of overt political signaling from the discreet Brezhnev leadership makes the same point. For some months following his removal from the Secretariat, Kirilenko's protégé Riabov appears to have been the object of a ban. In one of his first acts in his new and humbler job as first deputy chairman of Gosplan, Riabov organized a major economic conference on May 17-18, 1979.<sup>6</sup> But his name was omitted from the extensive accounts of the conference that were carried in the May 1979 issues of *Izvestiia* and *Sotsialisticheskaiia industriia*, as well as the accounts in *Planovoe khoziaistvo* published later in the summer. In fact, Riabov's name disappeared from the press entirely after his ouster as Central Committee Secretary in April 1979 and did not reappear until August 18 (in *Sotsialisticheskaiia industriia*). Interestingly enough, the end of the ban appears to coincide with a temporary recovery of political strength by Kirilenko. But a ban is not the same as doctoring, and its mechanism presents no mysteries in the case of an official who has been publicly and officially demoted.

A second preliminary point: We are not talking here about the rules of precedence that may determine how the leaders line up in front of the camera *before* a leadership photo is taken. Such protocol is most definitely political, but it is not what the Kirilenko episode is about.<sup>7</sup> The manipulation of an official photograph *after* it

<sup>5</sup> The other historical instances of manipulation observed since Stalin's death concern text, not photographs. Tatu noted a series of episodes in the spring of 1960 in which Anastas Mikoyan was described in the Soviet press as deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, when he was in fact *first* deputy chairman, a distinction that Soviet protocol normally does not fail to observe. In this case, the "error" originated with TASS, because it was followed in all Soviet newspapers each time it occurred. The episode was especially confusing in view of the fact that on other occasions during the same period Mikoyan was given his correct title, while at the same time there were other subtle indications that he was in political difficulty. (Tatu, p. 81.)

Tatu also noted the suddenness with which all mentions of Khrushchev disappeared during the brief time between the morning edition of *Pravda* on October 13, 1964 (which was filled with the usual references to him on all sorts of subjects) and the evening edition of *Izvestiia* on the same day. But he made no mention of any doctoring on that occasion. In fact, Khrushchev was mentioned four times more in the next two days' papers, when diplomatic protocol required it. In other words, on at least one occasion when there would have been a clear motive for doctoring even something so minor as the text of a congratulatory message, doctoring did not take place. (Tatu, pp. 449, 453.)

<sup>6</sup> He was chairman of the organizing committee and opened the conference, according to the December 1979 *Voprosy Ekonomiki* and January 1980 *Economic Series* of the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>7</sup> There have been several instances of including new faces in leadership photographs during the Brezhnev era. In the September 6, 1976, issue of *Pravda*, Nikolai Tikhonov was included in a photograph with Politburo members as if to suggest that he was about to be promoted. This episode coincided with Kosygin's illness in August-October 1976. Similar episodes involve other Brezhnev favorites, such as



has been taken would require active intervention on the part of someone in the course of processing. Therefore, what we are going to explore here is whether and at what points an official picture could be tampered with, at whose instigation, and with whose knowledge. Hence the emphasis here is on the technical steps involved.

Favoring the possibility of deliberate manipulation is the fact that the number of people immediately involved in processing a leadership photograph is small. The department of illustrations of a major Soviet daily typically consists of two or three full-time photographers (plus a certain number of free-lancers), a department head, his deputy, a retouch artist, and a laboratory technician. The number of people actually involved in photographing the leaders is smaller still, mainly because the strict security regulations by which such photography is governed make it more convenient for the newspaper editors to send the same photographer to cover all Kremlin events.

The process of clearance for the photographers begins with a request to the Ninth Department of the KGB, which is in charge of Kremlin security, to issue a pass for the occasion to be covered. There are two sorts of passes. The first allows access to various vantage points around Red Square, such as the Historical Museum and GUM. The second, which is restricted to a handful of accredited photographers, allows access inside the Kremlin itself. Under Stalin, only TASS, *Pravda*, and *Izvestiia* representatives were allowed to cover such events as Party Congresses. Since his death the rules have been slightly relaxed, and several additional newspapers now maintain photographers. In the early 1970s they were all well known to one another, for they formed a very small group.

Group photographs of the leaders are usually composites of several different pictures, taken in sequence. A wide-angle lens, which would enable the photographer to capture the entire group in one shot, would distort the images of those standing at the ends. Therefore, the usual practice is to take such pictures in thirds (telephoto shots of the leaders on the mausoleum are taken in halves). Each photographer does his own work, moving his camera from spot to spot to get all three pictures. Some mistakes can arise at this stage. One of our respondents asserted that in 1960, *Pravda's* Kremlin photographer, who was covering a session of the Supreme Soviet, included Gosplan chairman Novikov twice. The mistake was not caught by the editors, and in the next morning's issue, our respondent said, Novikov had exactly twice the prominence of any other leader in the picture.<sup>8</sup> The scene had been shot in three separate panels, as usual. As the photographer shot the right-hand panel, Novikov was sitting in a chair *to the right*. The photographer did not notice that by the time he shot the center panel, Novikov had moved to the speaker's rostrum, so he photographed him again. According to the respondent who told the story, *Pravda's* editor-in-chief, P. A. Satyukov, hurriedly called Novikov on the telephone with a personal apology. At the next day's meeting of the Supreme Soviet, the issue of *Pravda* with the "double Novikov" was passed around among members of the Central Committee, who were amused. Nevertheless, though the episode was trivial, the photographer and the technician involved received official reprimands

Konstantin Rusakov (*Pravda*, March 18, April 5, April 9, 1977) and Konstantin Chernenko (*Trud*, August 4, 15, 24, 1978; *Krasnaia zvezda*, August 24, 1978; *Izvestiia*, August 25, 1978). The leaders in question were actually present at the events being photographed.

<sup>8</sup> *Pravda*, December 21, 1960. Unfortunately, the faces are extremely indistinct, and we cannot confirm the truth of this episode.

and lost the honorarium they would normally have received for the picture, but they were not fired, and there were no further consequences. According to Vladimir Solovyev, a former free-lance writer for *Literaturnaia gazeta*, such doubling-up has occurred in other leadership photographs.<sup>9</sup>

Could such errors in montage account for the occasional missing leader? Consider another case, which occurred on June 13, 1979: On that date, three official photographs were published of the Politburo at the ceremonial signing of a new Soviet-Indian agreement. In *Izvestiia*'s picture, however, Arvid Pel'she, who had been standing to Andropov's right during the ceremony, was missing. It is hard to imagine a political motive here, for Pel'she, the ancient first secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, is a virtual figurehead who presumably aspires to nothing and threatens no one. Moreover, the accompanying caption in *Izvestiia* included Pel'she in the list of those present. The circumstances therefore point to a technical error. Pel'she may have been at the extreme left side of the *Izvestiia* photographer's right-hand panel (assuming that the picture was taken in the customary thirds) and may have been inadvertently left out.<sup>10</sup> A related point to consider is that some photographs of the leaders are considered more official than others. Photographs of current events (*sobytiinye snimki*) are not checked against any official TASS list, the leaders may be standing out of protocol order, and editors apparently have some latitude in processing such photographs. This may explain how on January 14, 1964, *Izvestiia* and *Sovetskaia Rossiia* cut off the edge of a photograph of the Soviet leadership greeting Fidel Castro at the airport, thus omitting Podgorny. *Krasnaia zvezda*, on the other hand, included Podgorny in the picture.<sup>11</sup>

The Kirilenko case is more complicated, however. First, one can imagine a motive, because of Kirilenko's prominence and the simultaneous occurrence of other signs that he was in political difficulty. But in addition to the motive, there is further circumstantial evidence: In the *Izvestiia* and *Pravda* photographs that appeared the day after the *Vecherniaia Moskva* version, Kirilenko had been restored, but the pictures of both Kosygin and Suslov had been tampered with. The flowers that television viewers of the May Day parade had seen them wearing that day (and which could be clearly seen in the *Vecherniaia Moskva* picture of the evening before) were no longer there. Apparently, the newspapers' retouch artists had found it necessary to paste in photographs of Kosygin and Suslov from some other event. And there was one more peculiarity: *Vecherniaia Moskva*'s leadership picture not only eliminated Kirilenko, it "leveled" all the Politburo members down to the same height. This affected particularly the second secretary of the Party, Mikhail Suslov, who is taller by a head than his shortest colleagues. Western observers speculated that someone had wished to emphasize the equality of all the Politburo members by literally reducing them to the same size. In short, there are enough odd circumstances surrounding the Kirilenko affair to make the "technical error" interpretation harder to defend.

<sup>9</sup> See Solovyev's letter to the editor, published in the *New York Times*, June 10, 1979. Apparently such mistakes are followed with relish by Soviet readers, and there is a certain class of aficionados who collect them, without considering them to be more than amusing errors.

<sup>10</sup> The *Izvestiia* picture is not simply a doctored version of the picture published by the other two papers, for the stances of the principals are slightly different and the photographers' credits are different also.

<sup>11</sup> Ploss sees this treatment as a sign that Podgorny played the role of spokesman for military interests and enjoyed corresponding favor with the military (Ploss, 1965, p. 275).

The plausibility of a technical error turns on three questions: (1) Was the *Vecherniaia Moskva* picture a montage, and if so, how was it put together and how typical was it of similar pictures? (2) How could errors in *Vecherniaia Moskva*'s picture have escaped the notice of the newspaper's editors and of higher authorities before it was published? (3) Was the *Vecherniaia Moskva* team subject to deadline pressures that made them more liable to make errors than usual?

The first point stressed by our respondents was that leadership photographs taken on formal occasions, such as the May Day parade or the opening session of the Supreme Soviet, are usually not only composites but also scissors-and-paste montages. One photographer-respondent described the procedure:

First you take a separate picture of the background. Then, if you see that the Politburo members are well arranged on the picture, that is, that they're properly visible, you print three or four of their faces at a time. If you see that they are in one another's way, so that some faces are half blocked out, you print only the ones that are visible. I always take a test picture and print it first. Then I look at the test picture to see who is supposed to stand where. The conference table is printed separately. Then, with the retouch artist I glue in the remaining members in their proper order. After that I check according to the instructions from TASS, to make sure I didn't leave anybody out. I cross-check the proper sequence using my test picture. Then I glue in the conference table. If an important person is standing at the speaker's rostrum, Brezhnev for example, then, of course, you have to leave Brezhnev at the rostrum. But if it's someone of secondary importance, then we cut out the rostrum, leaving only the table, the flowers, the background, and the Politburo members. The ones who are in the back rows—ministers, Central Committee secretaries and department chiefs—we also print them and glue them in, only not individually, but several at a time. But they are not important to us; above all we pay attention to the Politburo members. Then I check the final picture. After me my department chief checks it. Then I check it again. Then the newspaper secretariat checks it. And often the chief editor. So I never had any instances of technical mistakes.

What the photographic staff is most concerned about, to judge from this account, is the leaders' physical appearance, and this is the main reason for all the retouching and gluing. If a Politburo member's picture comes out looking bad, his assistants will sometimes call the newspaper and demand to know why it couldn't do better.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, a photographer covering official events takes many shots of the same scene, so that he will have several pictures of each leader on hand to use for his montage. Each photographer keeps his own little archive of negatives of the various leaders, for use in case of emergency. Sometimes the selection of pictures is done jointly by the top editorial staff. One respondent described the scene at *Komsomol'skaia pravda*:

[The photographer] brought the print, a long roll with all the takes on it, still wet from developing, to the chief editor's office. We rolled it out on the floor, everybody looked at it and picked the right pictures. "Replace Podgorny," the editor might say; and the photographer would find a Podgorny with the right pose and the right smile in his envelope of negatives.

From this and similar accounts, we see that most leadership pictures are montages.

<sup>12</sup> We found similar evidence of Polish leaders' sensitivity concerning their personal appearance in the media.

Our second question concerns supervision from above. The montage process is carefully monitored at several different levels, although supervision is less elaborate than it was in Stalin's day, when official photographs had to be submitted to the Central Committee before they could be printed. The authority in such matters is TASS. Shortly after an official event takes place, TASS circulates by teletype an official list and ranking of the persons to appear in the newspaper photographs. Our informants had no information about how this list is established and forwarded to TASS. However, the whole procedure is carefully arranged to avoid the possibility of a mistake: The instructions coming over the teletype (called "TASSovki" in the trade) are handled by special operators at the newspaper editorial office.<sup>13</sup>

Despite much cutting and pasting, it is apparently not the practice to add people to the picture who were not actually present at the time it was taken. On occasion, the accompanying text may be altered; on November 7, 1977, for example, *Pravda* and other newspapers listed Suslov as present at the official parade, even though the adjacent photos showed him to be absent. Whether this was manipulation or not we cannot say. The important thing, however, is that our respondents could recall no cases in which they had been instructed to add or eliminate someone or to change the members' ranking. The opinion of one of our former photographers was that below the top five members, the rank order of the Politburo members was not regarded as crucial by the members themselves, judging from their behavior as he watched them line up to have their pictures taken.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, the probability of an "honest error" in the processing of a leadership photograph is the result of a balance between the technical complexity of the operation and the several levels of checks and cross-checks by which the final product is approved and moved toward the printing press. Under normal circumstances, the probability of an error is almost infinitesimal. What can change the balance, however, is haste. On official occasions like May 1 and November 7, *Vecherniaia Moskva* must be signed off to press by 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. The parade through Red Square begins at 10:00 a.m. Consequently, on the day of the Kirilenko episode, *Vecherniaia Moskva's* photographer was under severe time pressure, first to take his pictures as early as possible, second to process them quickly. Consequently, Kirilenko could have been omitted in two ways: (1) Kirilenko may have been slightly late in joining his colleagues on the reviewing stand on the Lenin Mausoleum, and *Vecherniaia Moskva's* photographer may have taken his pictures and left before Kirilenko got there (conceivable but unlikely); or (2) Kirilenko could have been omitted in the montage process. The latter possibility requires two assumptions: first, that under deadline pressure the usual montage was done hastily and the cross-check by the

<sup>13</sup> One of our respondents added that to be doubly sure of accuracy, a courier comes around from TASS every two or three hours with printed versions of the same instructions (called *plotnye listy*), which are used to check the accuracy of the teletyped instructions. The photographic department uses the teletyped instructions to begin its montage, and then cross-checks it later against the confirmed instructions.

<sup>14</sup> Soviet readers are nevertheless extraordinarily conscious of protocol, and one may well imagine that many Politburo members raised eyebrows when Brezhnev's fast-rising young protégé, Konstantin Katusev, only recently named to the post of Central Committee Secretary, was seated among the full Politburo members at the December 10, 1968, session of the Supreme Soviet, ahead of all Politburo candidate members and secretaries. Soon thereafter *Pravda* (December 19, 1968) made a curious change in a TASS news account: Katusev's title was given as Secretary *pri* Central Committee, instead of simply Central Committee Secretary. Was the use of this odd term a veiled reflection of the pique of some influential leader? We should recall that in late 1968 Brezhnev's power was not as unquestioned as it later became.

editorial staff was perfunctory; and second, that the retouch artist and the technical staff of the newspaper were inexperienced and muffed the job.

Consider the first assumption: Because of time pressure, the customary montage may not have been checked against the *plotnye listy* brought around by the TASS courier two or three hours after the teletype instructions. It is even conceivable that the newspaper staff could not wait for the teletyped instructions, took a chance, and signed off on the picture before the *TASSovka* arrived.<sup>15</sup> It is also possible that there was a transmission error in the *TASSovka* itself. (It is unlikely that the *TASSovka* was deliberately manipulated to downgrade Kirilenko, because the same *TASSovka* was presumably circulated to all newspapers, including the morning dailies that included Kirilenko in their official pictures.)

As for the assumption of possible inexperience or incompetence: As previously noted, the illustrations department of even large Soviet dailies is quite small—one retouch artist, one technician, and one photographer accredited to cover Kremlin events. For an error to occur, it would be sufficient for one or two of the key figures in that trio to be ill that day, or newly hired, or even hung over. The “leveling” of the Politburo members to the same height is plausibly explained on such grounds: An inexperienced photographic technician, working in haste to glue the busts of the leaders into place along the mausoleum wall, may simply not have been aware, or may have thought it unimportant, that Suslov was taller than his colleagues. As for the omission of Kirilenko, there are two possible technical explanations: He may have been located at one end of a panel (mausoleum photographs being customarily taken in two separate panels) and inadvertently snipped off; or if the picture was a more elaborate montage (as it manifestly was, in view of the “leveling error”), the technician pasting in the leaders may have skipped Kirilenko on his list. In terms of the context of the problem, we should recall that *Vecherniaia Moskva* is a smaller and less important paper than the major dailies such as *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. This has a number of consequences that may be relevant: Its staff is presumably smaller, less highly qualified, and less well paid (and presumably turns over faster as a result). The newspaper is censored by Gorlit rather than Glavlit. In short, it is more plausible to imagine a technical error in *Vecherniaia Moskva* than in *Pravda* or *Izvestiia*.

Finally, it is not difficult to reconstruct a plausible sequence of events by which the Kirilenko episode was rectified by the time *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* appeared the next morning. Operating under less time pressure, the photographic staffs of the morning dailies presumably had time to check their work against the *plotnye listy* brought over by TASS, which presumably carried by that time a warning to be especially careful with Kirilenko.<sup>16</sup> But what about the missing flowers in the lapels

<sup>15</sup> Time pressure is even greater, of course, in the case of live radio or TV coverage. This may account for two oddities in Radio Moscow's listing of the leaders in its live broadcast from Red Square on May Day 1981. Speaking in “real time,” the announcer began by listing the leaders in alphabetical order, then mistakenly listed Suslov ahead of Kirilenko. He may have been thrown off by the fact that as the leaders emerged on the tribune, Suslov was indeed ahead of Kirilenko. It is unlikely that the *TASSovka* the announcer (presumably) carried in his hand was responsible for the inversion, since in the TASS release in *Pravda* the next morning Kirilenko and Suslov were listed in their proper alphabetical order.

The second oddity is that the radio announcer also listed Pel'she (in proper alphabetical order), who did not appear in the next day's official photograph or in the next day's TASS listing. It may be that Pel'she was ill that day and the *TASSovka* could not be adjusted in time for the live broadcast.

<sup>16</sup> *Literaturnaia gazeta*, because of its weekly publishing schedule, has the leisure to check its own photographs against the official versions published in *Pravda* and the other major dailies, and consequently no awkward episodes have ever been associated with it. If necessary, a newspaper can buy a picture from TASS, provided it has a little time to spare.

of Kosygin and Suslov? The speculation at the time was that in the process of doctoring, the negative of the leadership photograph had somehow been damaged, making it necessary to paste in pictures of Kosygin and Suslov taken on some other occasion. But, as we have seen, it is not necessary to assume a damaged negative, since busts taken from the newspaper's photographic archive are routinely pasted in. As a rule, newspaper photographers manage to avoid "missing flowers" episodes by taking several versions of the same official event (which enables them to assemble their montage from elements taken on the same occasion). Indeed, the "missing flowers" pictures could have been taken later or earlier the same day, because *Krasnaia Zvezda's* picture shows *all* the leaders without flowers. Did the flowers arrive late?

Many Western analysts of Soviet affairs believe with Borkenau that the Soviet press does not make mistakes. It is true that compared to the typographical standards of the *New York Times* in its pre-computer days, *Pravda* and its fellows are models of accuracy. Nevertheless, technical errors do occur. The purpose of this detailed reconstruction of the editorial process involved in official leadership photographs is to underscore the multitude of technical operations involved and to demonstrate that it is quite possible, given haste and complexity, for a technical mistake to occur.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that there are a number of points at which deliberate manipulation could theoretically occur:

1. *Manipulation of the TASSovki.* We do not know the process by which the official TASS lists are drawn up. Until the details of that process are known, it is possible to suppose that some political manipulation of the *TASSovki* could occur. (A conceivable suspect might be Leonid Zamiatin, who was for several years head of TASS, presumably retains ties there, and is thought to be an ally of Chernenko.) However, it is worth recalling that our respondents could not think of any instances in which the *TASSovki* instructed them to add, subtract, or rearrange Politburo members.

2. *Manipulation during technical processing of the photograph.* The possibility of manipulation during montage and retouching can be argued in two opposite ways. On the one hand, since the photographic staffs are small, it is conceivable that a quiet order could be given to the retouch artist or to the technician to alter the makeup or the order of the principals. However, the multitude of checks to which the final product is normally subjected, in which the final photograph is compared again and again to the TASS instructions, makes it highly unlikely that such manipulation could remain undetected by the staff.

3. *Substitution of an altered photograph at press time.* An altered photograph prepared outside the newspaper's editorial office could conceivably be substituted for the staff's own product at the last minute. Such a switch could escape the notice of the newspaper staff—at least until the paper appeared the next day. In the case of the Kirilenko episode, it is worth noting that *Vecherniaia Moskva* is located in the building of the *Pravda* Publishing House, which publishes and prints *Pravda* and several other major dailies, as well as *Vecherniaia Moskva* itself. A switch could therefore theoretically take place within the building.

Theoretically, but not probably. Our project interviews have convinced us of one thing: It is difficult to keep secrets in a Soviet editorial office. If an order to manipulate a photograph for political purposes had *ever* been received, it is highly unlikely

that our respondents (the larger sample of fifty-six people, in this case) would not have made reference to it. To take a parallel case: Those respondents who once worked for *Literaturnaia gazeta* were well aware when canned anti-Solzhenitsyn material arrived from the Central Committee to be printed in the newspaper. They were also aware of a few instances of photographic doctoring, ordered by *Literaturnaia gazeta's* editors, one involving a picture of a Soviet Jewish family in Vienna, and another of the Chinese shoreline opposite Damansky Island. (See Appendix D.) Our respondents did not hesitate to tell us about such episodes. But nothing of that sort was mentioned in reference to leaders' photographs.

Finally, our respondents themselves dismissed emphatically the possibility of political manipulation of leaders' photographs, especially by one leader seeking to slight a rival. Several persons with long experience in Soviet editorial offices have said that they cannot visualize any plausible mechanism by which instructions to tamper with an official picture could be transmitted without the fact being immediately known and reported to the KGB or the Central Committee. This insistence by our respondents is all the more striking when one considers that, in their general views on Soviet politics, they relish conspiratorial explanations for events.

We return now to the problem raised at the outset: The case for interpreting "mistakes" in the Soviet press as a form of esoteric political communication has always rested on two solid facts. First, the Soviet press is so carefully checked and cross-checked that it seldom makes mistakes, and second, even innocuous-looking blips and apparent bloopers frequently turn out, in hindsight, to coincide with real political rumblings. If the top leader wishes to administer a reproof or send a warning by means of an engineered typographical error, surely a discreet phone call by an aide is all that is required. Finally, in the case of Kirilenko, there is the apparent final clincher that throughout the spring of 1979 Kirilenko was manifestly in political difficulty, and it is now clear that the photographic blooper of May 1979 coincides with the beginning of a long slide that has taken Kirilenko, who had been until then as near to heir apparent as anyone under Brezhnev, out of the running for the succession. Circumstantial though the evidence may be, is it not persuasive?

Nevertheless, major mysteries remain: Mistakes can and do occur in the Soviet press, and we have seen that the special circumstances surrounding the Kirilenko case give us at least a plausible mechanism by which an "innocent" mistake could have occurred. Political manipulation of leadership photographs appears to be a very rare event, with only one documented case since the early 1950s. Such an action is inconsistent with the discreet style of the Brezhnev Politburo (at least until 1982) and also with the continued political survival of Kirilenko (since in all other known cases the victim had already lost his job or was about to). Finally, our respondents, much as they relish conspiratorial explanations generally, dismiss the notion of photographic doctoring. In view of these flaws in the evidence, would a jury convict? Only one composed of Kirilenko's peers could decide for sure.

## Appendix D

### THE CASE OF LITERATURNAlA GAZETA

#### INTRODUCTION

There is one newspaper in the Soviet Union that is so popular that it is difficult to buy on the newsstand; as with all scarce goods in the Soviet Union, one must make one's arrangements: On Wednesday mornings, if you are a good customer, the kiosk attendant will reserve it for you under the counter. That newspaper is *Literaturnaia gazeta* (*Literary Gazette*), which since 1967 (when it adopted its present format) has been the most interesting, the most sophisticated, and, many would add, the most cynical experiment in Soviet journalism in 50 years.

What makes *Literaturnaia gazeta* unusual is not its coverage of literature and the arts (which is pedestrian, on the whole), but its so-called "second section" (*vtoraiia tetradka*), devoted to satire, social commentary, sociology, popular science, economic issues, and international news. The second section is often highly innovative, introducing into the mass media in a colorful form facts and ideas about Soviet society and economy usually found only in specialized journals; and it has sometimes pioneered themes and subjects not seen in Soviet media before. As an illustration, during one six-month period in 1970 the second section ran articles on the following subjects: fatherless families, alcoholism and its hereditary effects, slow mail delivery and poor train service, the proper roles and status of defense lawyers, environmental threats to Lake Balkhash in Kazakhstan, poor training of sociologists, accelerated teaching of children, computerized management systems, passport restrictions on ex-convicts, discrimination against younger scientists, an instance of parenticide, and many more. It is a rare issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta* that does not feature an article under the prestigious byline of some member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, often a response to an article by a prominent Western authority, printed in translation on the facing page. Thus in 1970, *Literaturnaia gazeta* readers were introduced to short essays by physicist Freeman Dyson on human colonization of space, Paul Ehrlich on ecological doomsday, Max Born on his feelings of guilt about his part in the creation of the atomic bomb, biologist George Wald on the future evolution of society, and more. Thanks to novel material of this kind, *Literaturnaia gazeta's* circulation jumped from 350,000 to 1,000,000 within a year after it adopted its present format and may have reached 3,000,000 by the early 1970s.

The innovative role played by the second section of *Literaturnaia gazeta* raises intriguing questions about how new ideas gain legitimate public circulation in Soviet society. It has become a commonplace that one of the cardinal features of contemporary, "post-industrial" society everywhere is an explosion of knowledge and information, particularly of society's knowledge about itself. At the same time, educational backgrounds and professional roles have become so highly specialized that people in responsible positions must keep abreast of fast-moving developments in dozens of fields far from their own. In the West, the media have come to play an ever more crucial role in filling the gap by giving educated people at least a first exposure to new ideas about law, science, society, morals, and politics.



How much of that process takes place in the Soviet Union? In any given discipline, the Western visitor will find Soviet colleagues who are fully as curious, sophisticated, and well informed as their Western counterparts. But their knowledge and sophistication about areas outside their own specialty are commonly much lower, an amalgam of hearsay, received prejudice, and clichés. The Soviet system of education and the Soviet media provide them little detailed, up-to-date information about their own society on matters such as criminality, public health, social and sexual mores, ethnic problems, class stratification, and income distribution; and still less about public policies to deal with such issues. Soviet readers find even less, it goes without saying, on politically sensitive matters, such as defense policy, political succession, or civil and human rights. Yet without some mechanism for the public circulation of new ideas in all directions (as opposed to a simple top-down transmission belt), without some process of sampling a complex and rapidly changing reality, how can an advanced industrial society evolve?

This is the context in which *Literaturnaia gazeta* takes on special interest for the Western observer: At first glance the famed second section appears to be one of a handful of exceptions to the overall pattern of the Soviet media. What is the purpose of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* unique formula? Who is responsible for it, and how is it carried out? What are its limits, and how have these evolved over the fifteen years of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* existence? Above all, what has been the impact (if any) of *Literaturnaia gazeta* on policymakers, people of ideas, and the educated public? Has *Literaturnaia gazeta* served as a means for intellectuals and technical specialists to introduce new ideas into legitimate circulation in Soviet society, and even within the policymaking elite? Or is *Literaturnaia gazeta* simply a more sophisticated version of the standard transmission belt by which the Soviet population is mobilized around state policy? Is it, as many disappointed Soviet intellectuals will tell you, simply a demagogic fraud?

Like other Soviet newspapers, *Literaturnaia gazeta* is monitored, censored, and controlled by the elaborate mechanism described in Section II. If *Literaturnaia gazeta* enjoys greater latitude than other Soviet periodicals in the subjects it is allowed to raise, or if it shows more daring in pursuing them, does that mean that *Literaturnaia gazeta* has a special permissive relationship with the censors and controllers? Or, on the contrary, as the price for its latitude, must it undergo especially stiff scrutiny? From what we have seen in earlier sections of this report, we can be certain that *Literaturnaia gazeta's* special style is the result of a deliberate policy of the top leadership, and this raises the most intriguing question of all: Why does the Soviet leadership want a *Literaturnaia gazeta*?

In this appendix we seek to explain the unique blend of originality, reformism, conservatism, and slick propaganda that is the *Literaturnaia gazeta* formula, and thus to understand the significance of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in the Soviet media system and in Soviet society. Our account is based primarily on the testimony of Soviet journalists formerly associated with the paper, supplemented by a selective reading of it.

## ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF LITERATURNAIA GAZETA

*Literaturnaia gazeta* as we know it today dates back to the beginning of 1967. Its predecessor, a conventional plowhorse of a newspaper, had reported on cultural

affairs three times a week for nearly forty years in the standard 4- to 6-page format of most Soviet dailies. The new version, which inherited from the old only its name and its affiliation with the Union of Writers, appears weekly in an unusual 16-page format and a colorful, lively layout. Behind the new format was a largely new staff, but the chief editor had been in place since 1962, which suggests that although most of the actual changes took place in 1966, the plan to revamp the newspaper may have been in the making for as much as four years. Unfortunately, none of our respondents had been on the staff of *Literaturnaia gazeta* before 1966, so we have no information on the exact steps by which the new style was proposed and negotiated. Nevertheless, the general political climate of those years and the corresponding changes that took place in cultural policy over the same period do give some valuable clues about the probable motives for creation of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* new formula, and consequently some insight into its intended mission.

In 1962, with the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Soviet cultural policy reached a peak of liberalism not seen since the 1920s and not seen since. By the following spring, Khrushchev began a retreat toward more conservative positions in the arts, a move that immediately affected the balance of strength between liberals and conservatives in the Union of Writers and the other official cultural organizations of the country. In 1964, Solzhenitsyn was denied the Lenin Prize for Literature; in the fall of 1965 there occurred the first of many KGB searches and confiscations of Solzhenitsyn's writings; that same year witnessed the publication of articles in praise of Stalin and a clear (if ultimately abortive) movement designed to "rehabilitate" him at the 23rd Party Congress; finally, 1966 was the year of the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, at which the two Soviet writers were convicted of having illegally published their work under pseudonyms in the West. These were years of retreat from the gains won by literary liberals under Khrushchev; but they were not yet the dead years that followed Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Establishment intellectuals had not lost the hope that by direct appeal to the leaders they might yet sway them, as they apparently did in preventing the Stalin movement from going any further than it did; the underground *samizdat* movement and other forms of literary protest had not yet reached the major proportions they did later, and the collective leadership of those years, though clearly conservative-minded, was still feeling its way, seemingly hopeful that it could win over the liberal intelligentsia instead of repressing it. Something of the fresh air and enthusiasm of the late 1950s and early 1960s still remained. To an able entrepreneur and politician like *Literaturnaia gazeta's* editor-in-chief Chakovskii, the atmosphere must have seemed right for an attempt to convince his patrons in the Central Committee to make a bold attempt to reach out to the entire Soviet intelligentsia.

Aleksandr Chakovskii is the archetype of the experienced and sophisticated literary manager. Born in 1913, he has held editorial positions at important literary journals since the mid-1930s, beginning with *Oktiabr'* (1936-1941) and subsequently *Znamia* (where he was a member of the editorial board) and *Inostrannaia literatura* (1955-1962).<sup>1</sup> He was appointed editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1962.

<sup>1</sup> Chakovskii's career outline appears in *Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR; desiatyi sozyv*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo sovetov narodnykh deputatov SSSR, 1979, p. 472. Two other points of note: Chakovskii, a Jew and a non-Party member (until 1941) managed to survive the Great Purge as a department head of *Oktiabr'*, a tribute to his capacities as a political survivor. On the other hand, in his biographical sketch in *Deputaty*, there is a ten-year period (1945-1955) that is unaccounted for. This was a period of extreme

Chakovskii should not be regarded as a liberal. *Literaturnaia gazeta* under his leadership was among the first to reflect the new conservative trend in cultural affairs in 1963, publishing a negative review of one of Solzhenitsyn's short stories at a time when the writer still appeared to enjoy official favor.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Chakovskii's long tenure at *Inostrannaia literatura* presumably gave him broad exposure to the world of foreign literature and journalism, and this background may have been one of the sources of inspiration for the sophisticated formula he developed for *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

Despite the unavailability of details, there can be no doubt that the decision to launch the new *Literaturnaia gazeta* could only have been taken at the highest levels: The strategic location of the newspaper as the main organ of the Union of Writers, the suddenness of the change in the newspaper's style, and the boldness of its new coverage made its appearance one of the most noteworthy events in postwar Soviet journalism, and as such inconceivable without the express approval of the Politburo and the close supervision of the Central Committee staff.

Although very much in command, Chakovskii is frequently absent from his office, sometimes for long periods.<sup>3</sup> The effective boss of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in most matters, until his transfer to a publishing house in 1980, was first deputy editor V. A. Syrokonskii. All our respondents agreed that Syrokonskii is a highly capable individual who was directly responsible for much of the initial panache of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, as well as for the elements of daring and originality that it contained. Syrokonskii's background, perhaps even more than Chakovskii's, attests to the high-level sponsorship to which *Literaturnaia gazeta* owes its beginnings. A graduate of the highly prestigious Institute of International Relations (IMO) and originally a specialist on German affairs,<sup>4</sup> Syrokonskii, while in his twenties, had worked as an aide to Demichev and Yegorychev in the Moscow Party *gorkom*. He was then given the position of chief editor of Moscow's evening newspaper, *Vecherniaia Moskva*. At the time he came to *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1966, Syrokonskii was only 34, but he was already experienced and well connected.

The two deputy editors also had had extensive political backgrounds: E. E. Krivitskii, the deputy editor for literature, had been editor of a province newspaper in Volgograd before being transferred to the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee as *instruktor*, where among other duties he was responsible for supervising *Literaturnaia gazeta*. His move in mid-1968 to the staff of the newspaper he had formerly overseen at the Central Committee may be one of the symptoms of an important turning point in the atmosphere around *Literaturnaia gazeta*, a subject to which we return below.<sup>5</sup> The other deputy editor, A. S. Terter'ian (now retired), had formerly been, according to one of our respondents, a colonel in the Soviet Army and a high-ranking military censor. Terter'ian, who had the reputation of being less

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anti-Semitic discrimination and cultural repression. Did Chakovskii, who is a graduate of the Moscow Literary Institute and a member of the Union of Writers, simply busy himself writing?

<sup>2</sup> Issue of August 31, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> During one of those absences, he wrote a novel about the siege of Leningrad, called *Blokada*. During another absence, it is rumored, he collaborated in the ghost-writing of Brezhnev's official autobiography.

<sup>4</sup> It is fairly unusual for an "internationalist" to end up as editor of a "domestic" newspaper; the two career lines have traditionally been kept quite distinct, although that pattern may be changing in recent years.

<sup>5</sup> Our respondents' information about Krivitskii is corroborated by the memoirs of a former head of the information department at *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Perel'man, p. 121).

strict than Krivitskii, was in charge of the internal affairs section. Finally, O. N. Prudkov, the member of the editorial board responsible for the international section, was also the secretary of the *Literaturnaia gazeta* Party committee. An editorial team with such strongly political backgrounds is by no means uncharacteristic of Soviet journalism, as we have seen earlier in this report. And that, perhaps, is the point: Despite its unusual style, *Literaturnaia gazeta* has been run from the outset by a team of professionals whose careers, on paper at least, do not differ from that of other editorial teams. If anything, their links with the political and media control apparatus are closer than usual.

Their initial mandate, however, was quite exceptional. To begin with, Syrokomskii appears to have had carte blanche to hire virtually whomever he pleased. He raided the editorial offices of the major Moscow media and assembled a team that our respondents (even those who have no particular fondness for *Literaturnaia gazeta* today) described as the best in the business at the time. A large number were Jews, including major department heads: In addition to Chakovskii himself, there were Gorbunov (managing editor), Volin (economics), Mikhailov (science), Galanov (arts), Sinel'nikov (section head for Russian literature), Perel'man (information), and Suslov (deputy head of the satirical section).<sup>6</sup> Some of our respondents estimate that as many as half of those on the staff of *Literaturnaia gazeta* were Jewish.<sup>7</sup>

In the early years the atmosphere at *Literaturnaia gazeta* was enthusiastic and highly informal. Perel'man reports that Chakovskii and Syrokomskii were called by their staff and their secretaries simply "Chak" and "Syr,"<sup>8</sup> which would have been unthinkable in any other Soviet newspaper office. Planning sessions (called *planerki*) were also informal and free-wheeling. In the early years, a smaller ad hoc group of staff members which called itself the "Brain Trust" (*mozgovoi tsentr*) met periodically with Syrokomskii to discuss ways of making the newspaper interesting and popular with readers.<sup>9</sup> (A respondent identifies this early group under the name of "Council of Great Ideas.") *Literaturnaia gazeta* had greater latitude in its coverage, because it did not have to run as many "required items" of the kind that take up the front page of most Soviet newspapers. The staff also had a sense at that time that no subject was altogether out of bounds. According to one respondent, sometime during the first year, the Brain Trust had the idea of doing a feature story on Brezhnev himself, to tell *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s readers what a day in the life of the Party General Secretary was like, to show them "that there is a person who can make mistakes, who worries, who solves various problems, who meets with people, etc." The proposed story was actually accepted by Syrokomskii and inscribed in *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s proposed publication plan, but it came to an abrupt end when the project was vetoed higher up.

In these early years, the second section of *Literaturnaia gazeta* caused a sensation among Soviet readers. It was the brainchild of two people above all: Syrokomskii, the first deputy chief editor, and A. I. Smirnov-Cherkeзов, a member of the

<sup>6</sup> Perel'man, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> In the Soviet Union, Jews are considered a distinct nationality and are identified as such on their passports, as is Chakovskii.

<sup>8</sup> Perel'man, p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> The group had about eleven members, including Mikhailov, Rubinov (head of the *otdel moral'no-bytovykh problem*, the department of moral and everyday problems), Volin, and Agranovich (a talented staff writer in the economics department).

editorial board who was in direct charge of the second section. Smirnov-Cherkezhov was an imposing figure, six-and-a-half feet in height, described by those who knew him as "rough-hewn out of old Russian oak." Once a construction engineer, Smirnov-Cherkezhov had been a political prisoner in concentration camps until Stalin's death. Rehabilitated and allowed to return to Moscow in the mid-1950s, he earned a living at first as a writer of popular science, and even as a member of the editorial board he continued to conduct interviews and contribute articles to *Literaturnaia gazeta* up to the time of his death in 1970.<sup>10</sup> But his most important contribution, in our respondents' view, was that he defended the original and daring initiatives of the department heads below him. The latter may have had more talent and originality (Mikhailov, in particular), but Smirnov-Cherkezhov enjoyed a special authority, deriving not from political connections (no one has mentioned that he had any), but from his air of old-Russian moral authority and his willingness to speak out. Smirnov-Cherkezhov got along well with Syrokomskii, who respected him and supported him; and he did not fear to speak up to Chakovskii himself. One of our respondents remembered that Chakovskii once dropped a cynical reference to the people arrested and imprisoned under Stalin as "finished." Smirnov-Cherkezhov looked at Chakovskii coldly and said, "Aleksandr Borisovich, I don't consider myself finished." But because of his sympathy for tough reporting, Smirnov-Cherkezhov sometimes got into trouble. Perel'man related that once he prepared a feature entitled "Doctor of Today, Who Are You?," containing strong criticism of the poor professional training and attitudes of Soviet medical doctors. Smirnov-Cherkezhov was so pleased with the article that he called Perel'man into his office to praise its hard-hitting truthfulness. But the article was vetoed by Chakovskii on the grounds that it was too negative and might offend powerful people in the Ministry of Public Health. Deputy chief editor Terter'ian also summoned Perel'man to *his* office, but for an angry dressing-down; and Smirnov-Cherkezhov was blamed for not supervising the science department tightly enough.<sup>11</sup>

One of the second section's most popular specialties was a series of "experiments," initiated in Rubinov's department, aimed at exposing shortcomings in essential public services. To check the quality of Soviet postal service, *Literaturnaia gazeta* sent letters throughout the country, then revealed to its readers (for whom it was presumably not news) how scandalously long the letters took to arrive. They did the same over the years with train service,<sup>12</sup> telephone service, and the like. In every case, as Soviet journalistic tradition requires, the ministries concerned issued formal statements (which *Literaturnaia gazeta* duly printed) acknowledging shortcomings and promising improvements. But Rubinov and his reporters would then perform the experiment again, showing that things had not improved at all, and back again would come the ministries' embarrassed replies. While criticism of poor public services is nothing new in the Soviet media, *Literaturnaia gazeta's* articles were unusually persistent and broad.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, his article calling for the creation of places to drink beer and wine as a means of combatting the effects of vodka, "Piteinye zavedeniia," May 13, 1970, pp. 12 and 13; also his interview with Academician V. M. Glushkov on applications of computers to industrial management, one of the first articles in what soon became a major movement, "Brazdy upravleniia," May 6, 1970, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Perel'man, pp. 160-162.

<sup>12</sup> For Rubinov's summary comments on the letter-delivery experiment, see the issue of February 4, 1970, and a follow-up on March 18, 1970. The series on train service began on April 8, 1970, and continued in the issue of May 13, 1970.

Another specialty of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* second section was reporting "from inside the laboratory" on the working conditions of Soviet scientists and technologists: their pay, their training and promotion, and their morale and scope for initiative. Though it was never suggested in so many words that there was something wrong with Soviet science, the general tone of these articles was critical of the rigidities of the research system.<sup>13</sup>

We come now to a darker side of *Literaturnaia gazeta*. Sharing the second section with the domestic departments is the international coverage, which regularly occupies three of the section's eight pages. The contrast between the domestic and international coverage is striking. The page devoted to current world events (p. 9) is shrill and crudely propagandistic; its particular specialty is the grisly photo-reportage of imperialist atrocity and repression, usually reproduced from the Western press. On the inside pages, a reader of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1970 could find full-page coverage of the following: Western intelligence services (January 1), Zionism and Israeli aggression (March 4 and March 25), the future of China in the world (April 15), Kent State (May 13), a two-installment translation of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* (May 27 and June 3), the confessions of former Bolivian Minister of the Interior Antonio Argedas, titled, "I Was an Agent of the CIA" (June 17 and 24), and Ernst Genri on the left and the right in the 1970s (July 1).

To give the editors their due, the style of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* international section is as original, in its way, as that of the rest of the second section. It has the lurid appeal of a tabloid or a Hollywood gossip column. Soviet readers find titillating revelations about espionage (p. 9 of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, for example, is where Moscow correspondents for the Western press, if they have somehow displeased the Soviet government, will read about themselves, usually on their way out of the country); they can sample the depths vicariously with stories about Western drugs and crime; and here and there (as in G. A. Arbatov's articles on the 1972 Nixon-McGovern race or Vitalii Ozira's descriptions of Western management consultants),<sup>14</sup> there is insightful, if slanted reporting. While the basic message of the international section of *Literaturnaia gazeta* is not essentially different from that of the rest of the Soviet press, the sensational "eyewitness" style (supplied, for example, by *Literaturnaia gazeta's* roving Genrikh Borovik) gives the Soviet reader the impression that he is getting a livelier and more detailed story. In addition, some of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* international coverage is clearly aimed at the technical intelligentsia.<sup>15</sup>

Leaving aside the international section for the moment, the domestic side of the second section raises some intriguing questions as well: How much room is there for the personal initiative of individual correspondents or department heads? What are

<sup>13</sup> One of the occasional contributors to *Literaturnaia gazeta's* science section was Mark Popovsky, who later emigrated to the West, where he wrote *Manipulated Science* (New York, Doubleday, 1979), in which the full extent of his critical views can be seen. Nevertheless, something of the same flavor can already be found in his writing for *Literaturnaia gazeta*, for example, in his criticism of the scientific gerontocracy, in "Kto syzmal'a nachnet: ob ottsakh i detiakh v nauke," June 17, 1970, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Ozira, now a dean at the Plekhanov Institute for the National Economy, studied for a time at the Harvard Business School and in the 1970s was one of the most visible Soviet boosters of Western management methods. See "Management Consultants" (the words are in English in the title), June 24, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> For example, in the early 1970s there was a wave of enthusiasm in Moscow for futurology; during that time, *Literaturnaia gazeta* ran several articles warning its readers about the political messages contained in such work (February 11 and May 20, 1970).

the limits to their coverage? Chief editor Chakovskii, at a meeting of the newspaper's staff, once told of a comment made by one of Brezhnev's aides: "You're an unusual newspaper: You're like a sort of socialist Hyde Park." Chakovskii went on to interpret that remark to mean that the leadership saw *Literaturnaia gazeta* as a medium through which a wide range of establishment opinions could be voiced without committing the leaders to an official position. The importance of this role of *Literaturnaia gazeta* was to make the reader aware that the Party recognized that certain problems were important, that it was thinking about them and encouraging others to do so as well<sup>16</sup>—in short, to demonstrate to intellectuals that the Party was on the job. As such, *Literaturnaia gazeta* is simply an official safety valve, provided for the liberal intelligentsia.

This formula implies both limits and opportunities. According to our respondents, most of the coverage of the second section was the result of initiative from below. In fact, once it became known that *Literaturnaia gazeta* was a daring newspaper that reached a wide audience, ideas and would-be authors started pouring in from outside. For example, responding to the pleas of two desperate mothers whose boys had been mistakenly arrested by the police, *Literaturnaia gazeta* staff writer Sergei Smirnov reportedly wrote a widely noted account of a murder case in the writers' village of Peredelkino. Ideas for surveys and interviews about Soviet society came from members of the Institute for Concrete Sociological Research (IKSI), who were disgruntled by the lack of official receptiveness to their findings. In addition, *Literaturnaia gazeta* attracted ideas from many good free-lance writers and free-lance associates, such as Il'ya Foniakov (who contributed several articles that eventually gave *Literaturnaia gazeta* some trouble, including a series on neglect of the Hermitage Museum—described in Section IV—and another on a management consulting firm at Akademgorodok named "Fakel," which soon encountered the disapproval of the Party); the sociologist-demographers Perevedentsev, Shliapentokh, and Uralnis; writer Volkov, who launched *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s campaign for Lake Baikal; Borin, who discovered the talented orthopedist Elizarov in a remote provincial clinic; Popovsky; Yanov; and many others.

Nevertheless, despite relatively broad scope for initiative from below, the process of planning the newspaper's coverage was highly structured. While the idea for a "round-table" discussion, or a debate, or a "discussion club" feature might come from department heads Volin or Mikhailov, the course of the debate was not left free to evolve spontaneously. Though the series itself might go on for a year or more, according to our respondents, every contribution was planned in advance, the participants were identified ahead of time, and the necessary visas were obtained from any state agency whose sensibilities might be ruffled. Thus the appearance of spontaneity in many of these debates, where later articles appeared to come from the public in response to earlier ones, was in fact illusory. The major exception was an occasional article summarizing the mail received from readers. Debates or discussions could be discontinued or reshaped if signs of Central Committee displeasure appeared (as we shall see presently), but for the most part *Literaturnaia gazeta*'s coverage was carefully mapped out in advance, usually three to four months ahead of time.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Perel'man, p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> According to one respondent, in the early days of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, the planning process was loose and informal. As time went on, however, planning became more rigid. The orchestrated Soviet media

## LITERATURNAlA GAZETA'S RELATIONS WITH HIGHER-UPS

In view of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* unusual style, its relations with "higher" organizations are of special interest. In particular: (1) How much of the *Literaturnaia gazeta* material is actually undertaken at *Literaturnaia gazeta's* own initiative, and how much is prompted from above as part of coordinated campaigns in favor of this or that new policy? Does *Literaturnaia gazeta* ever succeed in having any impact on state policy as a result of its initiatives? (2) Does *Literaturnaia gazeta's* scope for initiative differ substantially from that of any other Soviet newspaper? (3) How much direct intervention takes place from higher-ups, on what issues, and through what channels? (4) Do *Literaturnaia gazeta* staffers get into trouble over their choice of topics or the way they carry them out? (5) How is *Literaturnaia gazeta* regarded by higher-ups? Is there any evidence that *Literaturnaia gazeta* staff are able to play one authority against another, taking advantage of their specially favored position?

It is necessary to point out, once again, the limitations of our data. None of our respondents had been in a sufficiently high position at *Literaturnaia gazeta* to have had direct experience with the routine day-to-day interaction between the top editors and the Central Committee apparatus. Communication takes place regularly over the closed telephone line called the *vertushka*, receivers for which are located in the offices of Chakovskii and Syrokonskii,<sup>18</sup> or through the regular biweekly briefings held for media editors at Central Committee headquarters. In addition, Chakovskii's reputed personal connections with Brezhnev and other major figures may give *Literaturnaia gazeta* an additional channel of communication not normally available to the media. Also, the extensive experience that three out of four of the top figures at *Literaturnaia gazeta* have had in dealing with the Party apparatus from the inside presumably gives them extensive personal contacts with the Central Committee. For all these reasons, then, we can conjecture that the top figures of *Literaturnaia gazeta* maintain extensive routine communication with the Central Committee apparatus and possibly even with Politburo members.

But the staff members from whose ranks our respondents came were aware only of those relations with outside authority that brought representatives of other organizations to *Literaturnaia gazeta* in person, such as a trio from the KGB that came regularly to sit in a room at *Literaturnaia gazeta* and read a selection of letters to the editor. Another source of glimpses into the ordinary dealings with higher-ups consisted of the occasional remarks dropped by the top editors to their subordinates.

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discussions are in sharp contrast to the free-wheeling journalist-initiated discussions so prevalent in Polish media. See Curry and Johnson, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: Summary Report*, Section VI.

<sup>18</sup> The only direct experience our respondents had of the communications exchanged over the *vertushka* came when they happened to serve a turn as duty officer on weekends or holidays, a chore that included monitoring the *vertushka*, or when the respondent happened to be present in the editor's office when calls came in. One of our respondents described a comic episode: One day, when the respondent was duty officer, he happened to take a call on the *vertushka* from Brezhnev's aide Aleksandrov-Agentov. The call, coincidentally, concerned our respondent. "My colleagues here have read your column and they find it very funny," Aleksandrov said. "I don't find it funny at all. I am calling for an explanation." Understandably, our respondent froze. It turned out, however, that Aleksandrov was genuinely curious, and our respondent proceeded to give him the explanation he asked for. Recalling the episode, the respondent added, "But just imagine—what if it had been Chakovskii who had picked up the phone! What would have happened to me then?"



One of our respondents, for example, was told once by Syrokonskii that Politburo members received two personal subscriptions to *Literaturnaia gazeta*, but that more often than not the leaders themselves did not read it and became acquainted with major articles through their children.<sup>19</sup>

Because of this vague knowledge, our respondents were often uncertain whether a given initiative came from Chakovskii/Syrokonskii or from higher up. For example, a former photographer was summoned to Syrokonskii's office one day and instructed to go immediately to Astrakhan'. Cholera had broken out there, the city was under quarantine, and extraordinary rumors were circulating in Moscow. The photographer's mission was to show that the situation was under control. When he arrived in Astrakhan', he found himself greeted by the top Party leadership of the province, and his photo-reportage, when it was completed, was expedited to Moscow by Party courier—hardly the treatment one would expect unless the initiative for the story had come from a high level.<sup>20</sup>

As a second example, shortly after the Soviet-Chinese clash at Damansky Island on the Ussuri River in 1969, the same photographer was sent to photograph the area, once again on an assignment that he believed originated in the Central Committee. His job was to show the Soviet reading public that the area had returned to a normal (if vigilant) life, and thus to downplay the significance of the episode. (According to one respondent, this was a job for *Literaturnaia gazeta*, since for *Pravda* to have carried the same report would have given the article an excessively official air.) When the photographer returned with a shot of the Ussuri River that showed prosperous-looking settlements on the Chinese side, Syrokonskii ordered the photograph retouched to take out all evidence of developed civilization there.

As a third example, the newspaper once dispatched its managing editor Gorbunov and another staffer to Vienna, where a handful of Jewish families were waiting for permission to reenter the Soviet Union. When the resulting photo-reportage was submitted to Syrokonskii, his attention was drawn to a picture of an émigré family watching television while they awaited processing, a set of attractive bags at their side. Syrokonskii ordered the television and the bags removed from the picture, apparently to avoid giving the impression to Soviet readers that émigré renegades had it easy in the West. Was this Syrokonskii's own initiative? Since in many respects the top editors at *Literaturnaia gazeta* are also in practice the chief censors and the local representatives of the Central Committee, it is hard to pinpoint where initiatives and constraints come from.

In contrast to the day-to-day relations of *Literaturnaia gazeta* with political authorities, which took place largely out of the sight of staff members, there were occasional episodes of acute conflict or unusual intervention which involved the newspaper and higher authorities so visibly that no one on the staff could remain

<sup>19</sup> The same respondent recalls meeting Podgorny at an official celebration held on the day *Literaturnaia gazeta* was awarded the Order of Lenin. "I read your page," Podgorny told him. "I read it and my children read it. Very interesting page."

<sup>20</sup> The Astrakhan' report was published on September 16, 1970. Interestingly enough, the photographer, on his arrival in Astrakhan', found that the situation was indeed under control. Sixteen hundred cases had been discovered and twenty-two people had died, but the epidemic was clearly over. Yet when the photographer returned to Moscow, his reassuring news met with skepticism from friends and colleagues, who automatically assumed that he had slanted the story as ordered. Deputy chief editor Terter'ian stopped him in the corridor of *Literaturnaia gazeta* a week after the story had been published and asked with a knowing smile, "Now, what's really going on down there?"

ignorant of them. These episodes may be a better guide for judging the newspaper's relations with the authorities, although they may give a misleading impression that the newspaper's relations with political authorities were more conflict-prone or subject to greater outside intervention than was actually the case. (In reality, everyday relations are usually quite smooth, a tribute to the political sophistication of the editors.) But at the same time, such episodes give us what we are after: an impression of where the boundary line between permissible license and the forbidden is drawn, and of the sanctions that are applied to the newspaper when the line is crossed. In the following we discuss two such episodes: *Literaturnaia gazeta's* role in the anti-Solzhenitsyn affair and a scandal over an article on ex-convicts.<sup>21</sup>

## CASES OF CONTROVERSY

### The Role of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in the Anti-Solzhenitsyn Campaign

In the long campaign waged against Solzhenitsyn, beginning with his failure to receive the Lenin Prize for Literature in 1964 and continuing to his final expulsion from the USSR in 1974, *Literaturnaia gazeta* stood out as one of Solzhenitsyn's most determined and consistent enemies.<sup>22</sup> Several aspects of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* role in that campaign are worth pondering for the light they shed on the paper's relations with the Central Committee and on the basic attitudes of its top editorial staff, which contrasted so sharply with the paper's reputation for liberalism in the second section.

*Literaturnaia gazeta's* negative attitude toward Solzhenitsyn goes back to long before the new format of 1967, to the earliest years of Chakovskii's tenure as chief editor. In the issue of August 31, 1963, deputy editor Iurii Barabash published an unfriendly review of Solzhenitsyn's short story *For the Good of the Cause* (*Za pol'zu dela*), which was followed by two more articles, in which Barabash polemicized with *Novyi mir* and with liberal critic V. Ia. Lakshin over their favorable opinion of the work.<sup>23</sup> We have no information on the exact reasons why *Literaturnaia gazeta* took its position on Solzhenitsyn so early, although it is clear in retrospect that it reflected much more faithfully the stance of its parent organization, the Secretariat of the Writers' Union, than did the other major organ of that union, *Novyi mir*, which consistently defended Solzhenitsyn until its editorial board was finally replaced in 1969.

In 1968, however, a new and more curious phase began in the anti-Solzhenitsyn campaign. Beginning with the issue of June 26, 1968, *Literaturnaia gazeta* began to carry articles on Solzhenitsyn that were no longer the products of its staff, but were prepared by the Central Committee and/or the KGB and transmitted to *Literatur-*

<sup>21</sup> Many other cases could be developed from respondent testimony, including *Literaturnaia gazeta's* role in the environmental "debate" concerning Lake Baikal and the controversies over culture and agriculture at the turn of the 1970s.

<sup>22</sup> A detailed account of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* attacks on Solzhenitsyn can be found in Zhores A. Medvedev, *Ten Years After Ivan Denisovich*, New York, Knopf, 1973.

<sup>23</sup> *Literaturnaia gazeta* issues of December 12, 1963, May 12 and June 4, 1964. These episodes are described in Z. Medvedev, pp. 20-30.

*naia gazeta's* offices by courier.<sup>24</sup> The background is this: Solzhenitsyn's writings had begun appearing in émigré publications in the West. Solzhenitsyn suspected that they had been leaked by the Soviet authorities and wrote an angry protest to *Literaturnaia gazeta*. *Literaturnaia gazeta* published his letter but accompanied it with a rebuttal entitled "The Ideological Struggle—The Writer's Responsibility." What was of special interest about *Literaturnaia gazeta's* rebuttal was that it showed familiarity with certain of Solzhenitsyn's works—notably the draft of a play called *The Feast of the Victors* (*Pir pobeditelei*), the existence and content of which could have been known only by someone who was privy to materials confiscated earlier in a series of KGB searches. The 1968 article was followed by numerous others over the next four or five years, all showing the same peculiar hand.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that anti-Solzhenitsyn materials were received by *Literaturnaia gazeta* ready-made from another source was no secret to the staff. According to one of our respondents, the articles arrived from the Central Committee but had been written by a service of the KGB and came fully edited and ready to print without any change. According to this respondent, the same system was used for anti-Sakharov articles, attacks on other dissenters, coverage of major trials, and important international events. In another respondent's opinion, such materials were prepared by the Central Committee apparatus; the only action *Literaturnaia gazeta* had to take was to decide what page to put the assigned material on (this suggests that the *Literaturnaia gazeta* staff may not have had much warning that such material was on the way).<sup>26</sup> One should not think of KGB disinformation as being imposed on a *Literaturnaia gazeta* that is "actually" liberal; the top editors created the *Literaturnaia gazeta* formula in the first place and cannot be considered to be the prisoners of it.

Yet if matters were that simple, then *Literaturnaia gazeta* would not be the interesting puzzle that it is. We turn now to a second case, this one involving *Literaturnaia gazeta's* coverage of ex-convicts.

### The Scandal Over the Passport System

*Literaturnaia gazeta's* issue of July 1, 1970, carried a hard-hitting article by Viktor Perel'man on the fate of Soviet ex-convicts. In clear disregard of the usual journalistic ban on "generalization," the article denounced the practice of denying ex-convicts residence permits in the major cities and argued that such restrictions were the greatest single cause of recidivism among Soviet criminals. Perel'man's article, "A Man Has Returned (*Chelovek vernulsia*)" would be considered strong stuff in any country. Based on conversations with ex-convicts, he described how difficult it was for former convicts to create normal lives. One of the most serious obstacles was the passport law (*Polozhenie o pasportakh*), which prevented them from obtaining a residence permit for major cities, especially Moscow and Leningrad.

<sup>24</sup> The first arrival of such material is described in Perel'man, pp. 147ff.

<sup>25</sup> These events are described in detail by Z. Medvedev, who also tells of the day he called upon the deputy editor of *Trud* about an anti-Solzhenitsyn article that appeared in that paper on April 7, 1972. As he talked to the editor's secretary, she let slip that the article had been sent over from somewhere else and that *Trud's* staff had not even had time to read it before running it. See Z. Medvedev, p. 183.

<sup>26</sup> Perel'man, whose account is the most detailed available, confirms that the precise origin of the material was not known. "If it was by courier," he says, "that had to mean the Central Committee" (Perel'man, p. 147). But he writes that in his experience the articles were prepared for print by *Literaturnaia gazeta's* own staff, not typeset as some of our respondents believed.

The result, Perel'man argued, was hardship, separation from family, job discrimination—and recidivism.

Perel'man wrote in his article that he was first put on the trail of the story by readers' letters. But once the idea for the article had germinated, he found strong support from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. When deputy editor Terter'ian saw Perel'man's draft article, he sent him to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for a visa (as described in Section II, a customary step for any article that touches on the sphere of responsibility of a specific ministry or state committee). There Perel'man found himself warmly received, and the necessary visa was given by Minister Shchelokov himself. The MVD had done some research of its own on the link between passport restrictions and recidivism and had found that in cities in which the passport restrictions had been eliminated, the recidivism rate had gone down. Not only did the MVD approve the article, but it contributed three supporting articles by MVD officials, which were duly published along with Perel'man's.<sup>27</sup>

It seems inconceivable that such controversial material was not cleared in advance with the relevant department of the Central Committee, but apparently it was not, because "A Man Has Returned" brought an immediate and very sharp reaction from the Administrative Organs Department of the Central Committee, which is responsible for overseeing police matters. Terter'ian was summoned to the office of section head A. I. Ivanov, who demanded to know how *Literaturnaia gazeta* had dared to publish such a "provocation." Perel'man himself was called on the carpet by the head of the paper's Party committee, Prudkov, and by Syrokonskii. A special closed session was called at the Central Committee, at which Chakovskii and Shchelokov were summoned to account. Interestingly enough, however, despite the uproar over the article, no one on the *Literaturnaia gazeta* staff was fired, not even Perel'man himself. Perel'man believes that Shchelokov strongly defended the article, and that may have saved its author. The displeasure of the Administrative Organs Department did not soon abate, however, for at the next editors' meeting at the Central Committee, Ivanov appeared personally with a sharp attack on Perel'man's article, accusing him of trying to sow distrust of the Soviet constitution and its laws. Needless to add, *Literaturnaia gazeta* did not give this particular article its usual follow-up in subsequent issues.<sup>28</sup>

### RECKONING UP THE BALANCE: LITERATURNAIA GAZETA AS AN IMPERFECT VEHICLE FOR NEW IDEAS IN SOVIET SOCIETY

Trying to sum up the relations between *Literaturnaia gazeta* and higher authority leads to no simple picture, and this in turn complicates the task of understanding the role of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in Soviet society. In their relations with the Central Committee and various state ministries, the editors of *Literaturnaia*

<sup>27</sup> The three officials were I. Telepnev (head of the city office of the MVD in the Moscow suburb of Pereslav'-Zalesskoe), who described the large number of ex-convicts who settled in his town and "commuted" to Moscow; D. Kiselev (deputy chief of the Office of Internal Affairs of the Moscow City Executive Committee); and Professor M. Eropkin, a doctor of juridical sciences who was deputy chief of the Administrative Service of the Militia—all in all, an interesting and definitely official trio.

<sup>28</sup> Perel'man, pp. 179-181, and respondent testimony.

*gazeta* play several roles: At times they act as the representatives of authority, anticipating the reactions of the Central Committee and even erring on the side of caution or even zeal, taking care not to offend the Ministry of Public Health, or retouching photographs to further the Central Committee's propaganda line on China or Jewish émigrés. At times they become embroiled in conflicting institutional or bureaucratic interests, as in the incident concerning recidivism. At other times the editors play the role of *enfants terribles* of the establishment intelligentsia, acting as the accomplices of their restless staff and testing the boundaries of the permissible. Can one distinguish consistent and logical themes within this variety of behaviors?

One clear theme is the consistent difference between *Literaturnaia gazeta's* treatment of domestic affairs and that of international affairs. There is no evidence whatsoever of "boundary testing" in the latter; on the contrary, *Literaturnaia gazeta* appears to serve as the Central Committee's international slander column. One has only to examine the many outrageous articles about Western correspondents over the years to realize the gusto that *Literaturnaia gazeta* brings to this role. However, it is striking that our respondents did not particularly criticize Chakovskii for that; those who called him a demagogue and a prostitute (as some did) had domestic issues in mind, not foreign coverage. Moreover, as we have seen, it is uncertain how much of the international material actually originates in *Literaturnaia gazeta's* own offices and how much is contributed by the Central Committee apparatus or the KGB. Coverage of international affairs is subject to special rules throughout the Soviet media, not just in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and therefore one can consider, as our respondents apparently did, that the style of the international section of *Literaturnaia gazeta* is a form of unavoidable tribute the newspaper must pay in return for its license to carry "interesting" material on domestic matters.

Another clear theme in *Literaturnaia gazeta's* relations with outside authority is that it does not depart from the approved line of the Secretariat of the Union of Writers, and consequently the first section of the newspaper, which deals with literary affairs, is a model of respectable orthodoxy.

The interesting questions about *Literaturnaia gazeta's* position and role clearly center on the domestic coverage of the second section, particularly in economic and social affairs. How does *Literaturnaia gazeta* differ from other Soviet media, particularly the more specialized journals such as *EKO*, the monthly of the Institute for the Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of the Siberian Division of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk?<sup>29</sup> The latter, within the field of technological innovation and industrial management, is more venturesome and thorough than is *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and it is considerably more honest and forthright in its treatment of Western ideas and sources (it frequently serializes American novels in translation, for example—its editors appear to have a special fondness for Arthur Hailey). The difference appears to be chiefly that *Literaturnaia gazeta* is a mass newspaper, while *EKO* has a much smaller circulation.<sup>30</sup> *EKO* may

<sup>29</sup> The journal's full name is *Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva*.

<sup>30</sup> Under the circumstances, what is remarkable is how similar to *EKO* *Literaturnaia gazeta* often manages to be. Such *Literaturnaia gazeta* items as proposals to use citation rates as a means of judging the quality of scientific research, or discussions of career lines and managerial training (as in a long series entitled "Ot rabochego do ministra" that ran in 1976 and 1977), or the idea of creating a new academy for applied research and development ("Akademiia dlia neakademicheskoi nauki," 1975 and 1976) could have appeared in either *EKO* or *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

have a greater impact on its professional audience, but *Literaturnaia gazeta* has a broader impact on greater numbers of people, and its tone is correspondingly pitched much more explicitly at the everyday concerns of individuals. *Literaturnaia gazeta* often discusses subjects that are close to its educated readers' everyday concerns: proper child-raising (according to Spock, no less), premarital sex, the difficulties of buying and repairing automobiles, housing problems, life in the countryside, etc. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that *EKO* does not evoke hostility among Soviet intellectuals, whereas *Literaturnaia gazeta* clearly often does.

As for the impact of *Literaturnaia gazeta* on official opinion, our respondents were uniformly skeptical that any of *Literaturnaia gazeta's* initiatives ever contributed to *launching* a new government policy, or to calling leaders' attention to ideas that had not reached them before, or to shaping the actual course of policy debate. In their view, the direct channels by which influential technical advice and new ideas reach the Central Committee and the Politburo lie outside the media altogether, and those channels contain more information, both in depth and degree of innovativeness, than anything to be found in *Literaturnaia gazeta*. For example, *Literaturnaia gazeta's* coverage of serious demographic problems such as declining birthrates, patterns of migration, divorce rates, and so forth, was part of an orchestrated series reflecting new governmental policy, not part of an internal debate preparatory to new policy. On the other hand, as noted in Section IV, *Literaturnaia gazeta* was prominently involved at the turn of the 1970s in controversies over agriculture, culture, and other policy issues.

Shall we conclude, then, that *Literaturnaia gazeta* is a cynical deception run by careerists and opportunists, as several of our respondents asserted? Clearly, its editors are closely connected to the Central Committee apparatus and higher authority. We lack evidence of the paper's impact on policy formulation, but we can demonstrate its sometime role as a forum for raising new issues on which the leadership has not yet taken a stand. Perhaps we may borrow with profit the Marxist distinction between "subjective" and "objective" roles. Subjectively, the editors and sponsors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* may indeed be cynical men, and *Literaturnaia gazeta* a deliberate exercise in soft soap. But in terms of the questions we raised at the beginning of this appendix, *Literaturnaia gazeta* appears to reflect the "objective" tendency toward greater complexity and openness in Soviet society, themselves a product of increasing living standards, higher levels of education, interrelated problems of a modern economy, and complicated technologies. The editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* may not impress us with the depth or honesty with which they pursue "interesting" social and economic problems, but at least they raise them. By doing so, they accustom a mass audience to the idea—potentially a highly subversive one—that the shape and evolution of Soviet society and economy are the proper concern of the broad public. But only in this qualified sense is *Literaturnaia gazeta* a "Hyde Park of Socialism."



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